

# DRAMATICS

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Vol. XXV, No. 3

DECEMBER, 1953

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**Why the Chimes Rang**, presented at the Annual Christmas Vesper Service, December 21, 1952, by the Prescott, Arizona, Sr. High School (Troupe 735), Lillian Savage, Director, and Ethel B. Tyson, Technical Director.

## THEN AND NOW

By MARGARET GREY

## LOOK! NO NERVES!

By FREDDIE MILAM SAUNDERS

## I MAKE COSTUMES

By DORIS MARSOLAIS MARSHALL

## ARENA STAGING: LIGHTING CONTROL

By TED SKINNER

## SECONDARY SCHOOL DRAMA IN HOLLAND

By GERALD TYLER

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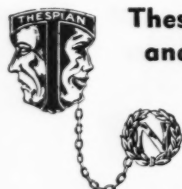
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WE ARE indeed honored to have the opportunity to publish *The High School Theatre: Then and Now* by Margaret Grey, Bellingham, Wash., High School. Miss Grey really knows the high school theatre, for she has lived with it for over 40 years. By reading between the lines of Miss Grey's article we realize that she is the personification of progress. Only her love and perseverance for the high school theatre, shown also by others like her, have made our theatre what it is today.

TO Holland we go this month with Gerald Tyler, Brighthouse, England, to visit the secondary schools in our Grand Tour of European countries. We learn of the Teneel Club, the school dramatic society in the Dutch Grammar Schools; the Amateur Theatre, represented by about four thousand societies; Scapino; and the Puck Company. Your visit will be most profitable.

QUITE frequently the production of a full length play in our high schools tends to disrupt classes, other activities and the homes of the participants. Careful planning on the part of the director often can prevent the occurrences of embarrassing situations which quite often reach the principal's office. Freddie Milam Saunders of Mission, Texas, in her article, *Look! No Nerves!*, offers some very valuable suggestions, which, if followed, will make for your dramatics program friends of the other teachers, parents and especially the administration. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

CARLA BLANK, a member of Troupe 836, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, has really caught the true Christmas spirit in her brief article, *A Merry, Merry Christmas!* It is a pleasure for me to publish occasionally articles written by student Thespians as a direct answer to the notorious articles published about high school boys and girls.

OUR hero and his dog Shep are this month again behind the scenes making costumes. I wonder whether or not Shep will also win the coveted title, *Best Thespian!* Don't miss reading Doris Marshall's third article of her series, *I Make Costumes*. I like her original, unique style of writing — and so will you!

BARNARD HEWITT, President of the American Educational Theatre Association, writes the editorial page this month about our observance of our Silver Anniversary. I am grateful for his contribution.

TED SKINNER continues his series this month by discussing the equipment, the set-up and operation of lighting control for the arena theatre. This article again is technical in nature. It is, I feel, a third real contribution for you Sponsors and your electrical technicians. *Arena Staging: Lighting Control* is "right down your alley."

OUR department editors again take us to the commercial theatre, the movies and to the radio and television studios. Four high school plays with pictures are featured in *Plays of the Month*. Mr. Friederich continues his excellent brief-viewing and our Thespians are again with us chattering away as usual.

FROM our entire editorial and office staff:  
A MERRY, MERRY CHRISTMAS

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DRAMATICS

# As I See It . . .

## THE GRAND TOUR

By the time the final curtain is drawn on our celebration of our Silver Anniversary, I feel sure that over 25 Regional Conferences will be held in as many states throughout our country. I am personally trying to attend as many of these conferences as I possibly can so that I can meet our Sponsors everywhere. I do not want to be just a figure which is known by some title or other at our National Headquarters here in Cincinnati; I want you to know me personally, to feel that your problems are my problems too. Unless you attend these conferences, how can we become better acquainted? Some day in the not too distant future your National Secretary hopes a schedule can be set up so that he can visit each troupe at its own school once every three or four years.

At this writing I have already attended four conferences at Middletown, Ohio; Birmingham, Alabama; Champaign, Illinois; and our fourth Regional Conference at the University of Washington, Seattle. Orchids to the Regional Directors who sponsored these conferences, to all their faculty assistants and student Thespians. The programs were excellent; the attendance far above expectations. Here are some of my impressions.

## Cumberland, Maryland—October 23, 24

Miss Jean Donahey represented the National Council at this conference. She reported that the program was delightful and that there were 250 in attendance. Two unusual high lights featured this conference: At the football game the host school band played *Happy Birthday* for our visiting Thespians, thus commemorating our Silver Anniversary; and the Student Council sponsored a dance after the game. Thank you, Miss Helen Smith.

## Seattle, Washington—November 6, 7

Along with over 300 delegates from four states attending our second Northwestern Conference, I was particularly impressed with the excellency of the plays presented, student participation in the discussions, the well-planned workshops on creative dramatics, costuming, make-up, puppetry and lighting demonstration. I publicly want to thank Dr. Glenn Hughes and the members of his Theatre department for their contributions which helped so much to make this conference so profitable and enjoyable. The presentation at the banquet of the Birthday Cake with its 25 candles, commemorating our celebration of our Silver Anniversary, was most impressive. Thank you, Miss Doris Adley.

## Tiffin, Ohio—November 7

Miss Florence Hill, State Regional Director, was very enthusiastic about both the caliber of the program and the excellent attendance at our second area conference in her state,



Fifth Birthday Party celebrating the granting of its charter, Winchester, Mass., High School, Troupe 729, T. A. Morse, Sponsor.

## Middletown, Ohio—October 10.

Well planned and executed program; attendance, over 250. Both students and Sponsors really entered into the discussions, which followed each presentation. Thank you, Miss Florence Powell.

## Birmingham, Alabama—October 16, 17

In addition to the excellent program and attendance of nearly 250, I was impressed by these factors: our conference banquet, which was the largest in attendance ever held in the school; the Thespian Mothers' Club, which planned and executed the luncheon in the park; and my introduction to Southern Hospitality, which is really something wonderful. Thank you, Miss Florence Pass.

## Champaign, Illinois—October 24

With 31 schools represented and a total attendance which exceeded 300, this conference proved to be a real inspiration for students, Sponsors and your traveling secretary. With the Workshops conducted by members of the Theatre department of the University of Illinois, we all profited far beyond our anticipations. I saw a superb one-act play, listened to beautiful choral singing, and saw and heard excellent student talent. Thank you, Miss Marion Stuart.

which was held at the Columbian High School. I was delighted to hear that in addition to a large representation from our Thespian affiliated schools there were 12 non-Thespian schools represented. I conclude with this quotation from Miss Hill's letter: "I was especially pleased with the plays. We are certainly improving in our productions." Thank you, Miss Mary Herron.

## A \$200 PRIZE!

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## CONGRATULATIONS, PHIL ANDERSON!

Phil Anderson, a Thespian of Troupe 301, Marked Tree, Ark., Marie Thost Pierce, Sponsor, won first place in the National F. F. A. Public Speaking Contest at Kansas City, Missouri. Nice going, Phil!

*A Merry Christmas to All!*

## 1953 Winning Readings

WETMORE TROPHIES were awarded this year to the following schools for winning first place in State High School Declamatory Contests.

MULLEN HIGH SCHOOL. Fort Logan, Colo. Won Denver Archdiocesan Speech meet with the dramatic reading, *AFRAID OF THE DARK*.

DONELSON HIGH SCHOOL. Won Tenn. N. F. L. with the oration, *WHY*.

RINGGOLD HIGH SCHOOL. Won La. State Contest with the humorous reading, *AT THE DECLAMATION CONTEST*.

LACONIA HIGH SCHOOL. Won N. H. State Contest with the dramatic reading, *CAMILLE*.

GORDONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL. Won Tenn. State Contest with the oration, *A NATION'S PROMISE*.

BEAVERTON HIGH SCHOOL. Won Oregon State Contest and Linfield College Invitation meet with the dramatic reading, *THE BUTTON*.

BEAVERTON HIGH SCHOOL. Won the Linfield Invitation meet with the humorous reading, *THE SCHOOL PROGRAM*.

STRONG HIGH SCHOOL. Won Maine State Contest at Univ. of Me. with the oration, *THE MIDNIGHT DISMISSAL OF A GREAT AMERICAN*.

CORINNA HIGH SCHOOL. Won Maine State Contest at Univ. of Me. with the humorous reading, *THE SPEECH JUDGE'S NIGHTMARE*.

FRANKFORT HIGH SCHOOL. Won Ky. N. F. L. with the oration, *THE MASTER LINK*.

GEORGETOWN HIGH SCHOOL. Won Ky. N. F. L. with the dramatic reading, *NYDIA, THE BLIND GIRL OF POMPEII*.

MIAMI HIGH SCHOOL. Won Okla. State Contest with the humorous reading, *THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER*.

MANUAL TRAINING HIGH SCHOOL of Muskogee, Okla. Won State Invitation meet at Langston Univ. with the dramatic reading, *MOTHERS OF MEN*.

BEAVER HIGH SCHOOL of Bluefield, W. Va. Won Interstate N. F. L. with the oration, *WHY*.

BEAVER HIGH SCHOOL of Bluefield, W. Va. Won the Interstate N. F. L. with the dramatic reading, *AFRAID OF THE DARK*.

WILEY HIGH SCHOOL of Terre Haute. Won Ind. N. F. L. with the dramatic reading, *THE MURDER OF KING DUNCAN*.

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL of Omaha. Won Neb. N. F. L. with the oration, *WHY*.

NORFOLK HIGH SCHOOL. Won Neb. N. F. L. with the dramatic reading, *NOTHING TO DESTROY*.

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# Our Heartiest Congratulations



Barnard Hewitt, President, American Educational Theatre Association.

IT IS a pleasure to extend to the members and Sponsors of the National Thespian Society, on behalf of the American Educational Theatre Association, the heartiest congratulations on the Society's Silver Anniversary in 1954 and the warmest good wishes for its continued growth and increasing influence in the high school theatre.

Unquestionably the remarkable growth of the National Thespian Society from 71 Troupes in 1929 to 1324 today has been a major factor in the steady improvement in secondary school theatre. Through its excellent magazine, *DRAMATICS*, with a monthly circulation of over 23,000, and through its numerous special pamphlets, NTS defines standards and provides practical advice on play selection, acting, staging, lighting and costuming. And the honor of election to membership is a strong incentive for thousands of students to do their best work in all departments of production.

The American Educational Theatre Association, concerned as it is with expanding and improving the educational theatre at all levels, is keenly aware of the service which NTS provides to theatre in the secondary school. High school theatre, along with children's theatre, provides the broad and solid foundation necessary for college and community theatre. Intelligent interest in and enthusiasm for good theatre must be developed in young people.

This is the common aim of AETA and NTS, and the two Associations have long cooperated in a variety of projects designed to further this aim. Close official cooperation is insured by the fact that NTS is represented on AETA's Advisory Council and AETA is represented on NTS' Advisory Board. Moreover, the officers of the two Associations are in close touch on matters of mutual interest.

Unofficially too, there are strong ties between the two Associations. Many NTS Sponsors are members of AETA, and a number of them are among its most active workers on major projects in the area of secondary school theatre. The *EDUCATIONAL THEATRE JOURNAL* provides them with articles concerned with the particular problems of teaching and directing in the high school, and with information about what is going on in other areas of educational theatre as well. At the annual AETA Convention they have the opportunity to meet and discuss with fellow teachers from all over the country their special problems, and to bring those problems to the attention of workers in community and college theatre, who can frequently contribute toward solutions. The whole of educational theatre benefits from this working together of NTS and AETA.

National Thespian's semi-annual National Dramatic Arts Conference is always a noteworthy occasion. The 1954 Conference celebrating the Society's Silver Anniversary will certainly be memorable. AETA extends the very best wishes for the 1954 Conference.

I hope that Thespian sponsors will begin their celebration by attending AETA's 1953 Convention at the Hotel Statler in New York City December 28, 29, and 30. Horace Robinson, of the University of Oregon, has arranged a stimulating program. The 1953 Convention may be a historic one for secondary school members, for they have determined to achieve the status of a Division, under the new By-Laws. And of course there are the extra-convention attractions of the Broadway stage, always in full swing during the Christmas holidays.

As the National Thespian Society approaches the quarter-century mark, it can look back with pride on substantial past achievement, and at the same time it can look forward with splendid prospects for continued expansion and growth, and for an ever-increasing contribution to the American theatre.

Sincerely,

*Barnard Hewitt*

BARNARD HEWITT, President,

American Educational Theatre Association

# THEN and NOW

By MARGARET GREY

ANY form of high school dramatics was mostly theory until 1918. As early as 1907 Dr. John L. Patterson suggested that acting scenes from dramatic writings might be prudently introduced into the curriculum of a modern school. By 1912 the National Council of Teachers of English recommended class dramatizations of required readings, such as *Ivanhoe* and *Silas Marner*.

After 1919 the professional theatre fell upon hard days, due partly to the movies. At the same time the amateur theatre movement which had begun in 1912, but was halted by the war in 1917, had a revival. About this time high school dramatics was recognized, and was considered important enough to receive attention; but even as recently as 1929 Kenneth Magowan stated, "Drama is a very new thing in the high schools. It is a product of the past six or seven years."

Today we are nearing the end of a quarter of a century of the real high school theatre. We have at last come of age; high school dramatics is an established fact; no one ever questions its importance (at least, not many), for too many students participate, and too many of the public attend our high school performances. No one ever questions that drama is a division of literature. However, we do seriously question the variability of the quality of our high school theatre.

Like Topsy, the high school theatre "has just grown," and because there was no criterion upon which to build our high school auditoriums and curriculums, we have mushroomed almost over night



*Seven Chances*, presented at Fairhaven High School, Bellingham, Washington, in 1927.  
Margaret Grey, Director.

into every conceivable type of theatrical plant. We have today everything from the makeshift stage to the most elaborate equipment.

Just to illustrate how many major changes have taken place, come back with me over a period of 41 years to my own high school. Our Fairhaven High School in Bellingham, Washington, was small; we had about 100 students, but we did a *PLAY*! It was an ordinary play, with no literary merit, but I had a part. I'm not sure how those parts were chosen; I probably was selected because I was fairly good in English. We rehearsed in a basement room which had never been finished—in fact it even had a dirt floor. As the big night approached, we began to look for costumes in our own homes and those of our neighbors. My dress, which I thought was very grand, looked as if I were costumed for a fancy dress ball, while the boy who played my husband wore his ordinary clothes, and looked more like my son than a husband and the father of a grown daughter.

We had no stage; thus sawhorses were set up in the study hall. They were

covered with planks which were warranted to fly up and hit you as you fell in the hero's arms. Footlights, there were none; as for the curtains, they were blue calico. It wasn't much of a performance, but I've carried a torch for high school dramatics ever since, and tucked away among my treasures of the past is a little scrap of that same blue calico curtain.

Before passing from that episode, let me pay tribute to our English teacher and director, G. Bernard Chichester, a gallant gentleman of the theatre, who has been one of my inspirations for these many years.

After leaving high school, I went to college, took part in plays, taught in a rural school where we used the same method of sawhorses, moved to a city grade school where there was no stage, then was transferred to a new grade school, which had a very good small stage, and there I did my first real production.

Then I returned to my former high school as a teacher. By that time the old study hall had been remodeled, and a very small stage had been built into the old wide corridor. In order to make the



*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, presented in April, 1952, at Bellingham, Wash., High School, Miss Grey, Director.

floor space a little deeper, the back of the stage had sliding doors with an apron which could be let down (a la a draw bridge) to add about five feet. The most distinguishing feature of that stage consisted of posts which rose to the ceiling. They were absolutely essential, as they held up the roof. We made trees of those posts, hung lanterns and draperies on them and used every device to camouflage them, but there they were in every performance.

Only a thin curtain separated the stage from the study hall; thus if we worked during school hours, we tiptoed around and counted ten before we pounded a nail lest we disturb the students. There were footlights and a small switchboard. We did manage a dimmer later and purchased two big spotlights. Some of our performances were quite creditable, in spite of the posts.

Time marched on! The old study hall became too small; a new stage, with border lights, footlights, pin rails, velvet curtain and even a gridiron was built. To be sure, it was placed at the end of the gymnasium. We rehearsed behind a curtain, while turnouts took place. We didn't mind the nights when the boys played basketball, because there was just the thud, thud of their feet, the sound of the ball and an occasional shouted "Here." But, oh, it was a different story when the girls practiced; they shrieked whether they got the ball or they didn't!

Of course there was a level floor in the gymnasium with folding chairs for the spectators and they found it difficult to see, also to hear, if it rained.

In 1935 our school burned down and we were transferred to the other high school. It had a small stage, fairly adequate, and a good-sized auditorium, but with a level floor.

In 1938 we moved into our new million dollar high school. Like Cinderella, I had gone from rags to riches, from sawhorses to a beautiful auditorium and a big stage. We still have our problems: Our theatre seats 1764; it is really too large for plays; it is a long way from the stage to the top balcony; acoustics are not always good in all parts of the auditorium; the seats are hard by the end of the first act; but it is a spacious theatre with lovely colors and beautiful lights.

The stage is large, 80 feet by 26 feet deep; the proscenium has an opening of 41 feet; we have a rich green velour curtain, electrically controlled; dark red velour teaser and tormentors; a gold olio curtain; elaborate switchboard; electrical units; and many pieces of equipment. We are especially proud of a new set of scenery, 35 pieces in all, built in the woodwork shop, covered and painted by the stage crew and stagecraft class. We are never quite satisfied; we always need something more and the stage is never quite big enough. Besides the big theatre, a large high school needs a little theatre.

In the high school theatre of today three facts stand out: almost every high

## 1929—SILVER ANNIVERSARY REGIONAL CONFERENCES—1954

Celebrating the Silver Anniversary of the National Thespian Society

- MISSOURI—Mary Williams, Regional Director, Chrisman High School, Independence.  
 OKLAHOMA—Maybelle Conger, Regional Director, Central High School, Oklahoma City.  
 CALIFORNIA (Southern): Marian Underwood, Regional Director, at UCLA, Los Angeles—January 9, 1954.  
 IOWA—Cecile Rughaber, Chairman, Wilson High School, Cedar Rapids—March 27, 1954.  
 MONTANA—Frederick K. Miller, Regional Director; Doris Marshall, Asst. National Director, at Helena High School, Helena—April 1, 2, 1954.  
 FLORIDA—Eunice A. Horne, Regional Director, Robert E. Lee High School, Jacksonville—February 25, 26, 27, 1954.  
 PENNSYLVANIA—(Eastern): Frieda Reed, Maizie Weil, Regional Directors, Senior High School, Upper Darby—March 20, 1954.  
 PENNSYLVANIA—(Western): Jean Donahey, Chairman, Senior High School, Brownsville—Spring.  
 VIRGINIA—Genevieve Dickinson, Regional Director, William Fleming High School, Roanoke, —March 5, 6, 1954.  
 KENTUCKY—Juanita Markham, Regional Director, Middlesboro High School, Middlesboro—December 9.  
 MICHIGAN—Margaret L. Meyn, Regional Director, at Western, Mich., College—February.  
 NEW ENGLAND—Emily Mitchell, Regional Director; Barbara Wellington, National Sr. Councilor, at Emerson College—February.  
 NEW JERSEY—Gertrude Patterson, Regional Director, Highland Park High School, Highland Park—April 3, 1954.

### SILVER ANNIVERSARY NATIONAL DRAMATIC ARTS CONFERENCE

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school has a stage, a curtain and an auditorium. These essential facts vary. There is every sort of stage from auditorium platforms to those as fully equipped as the best theatres. They vary in size, in equipment, in gridirons, switchboards, lighting units and scenery. The curtain may be makeshift, or the latest theatrical grand drapery.

Auditoriums are large or small, with good or poor sight lines; the floor may be level or inclined; the stage, well lighted or poorly lighted; the seats, comfortable or otherwise; and acoustics, excellent to poor.

Probably there are no perfect stages or auditoriums. All have defects and as soon as they are built, we wish there were changes. Either the right people are not consulted (the architects do not know school problems), or we do not agree on what we want or need.

In the state of Washington a three-day conference was held not so long ago to study ideas for planning new buildings on the secondary level. Those in attendance were architects, superintendents, high school principals, loaded with suggestions from their teachers and even laymen. This meeting was a step in the right direction.

Besides the progress made in the physical theatre, other noticeable changes now have taken place. In our early days educators reluctantly tolerated our efforts; today dramatics has been integrated in our educational curriculum. With the acceptance of dramatics there has grown a more sympathetic understanding of the values to be gained by the students—personal, social, cultural and even therapeutic.

With the changing years there has come more tolerance in the selection of plays, though there are still great restrictions in certain communities. We, as directors, carefully avoid the drinking and smoking episodes, shun the immoral and obscene, and frown upon too much reference to divorce and sex, even though we realize that our young students could probably tell us a great deal which we do not know, or want to know. Certainly there is more freedom in all our productions. More sophisticated types of drama are chosen, but many schools are turning to the adolescent plays to avoid some of the pitfalls. We will all agree that the choice of the ideal high school play is never easy.

Today our productions are much more finished than those of the past. Casting is given more careful attention, direction is more thorough, there is more subtlety in the portrayal of character. Through a wider use of creative dramatics we are training very capable young actors and actresses of whom we should be very proud.

Probably the greatest evolution in the high school theatre is most noticeable in the staging. Settings, scenery, lighting and costumes have a very professional appearance in many of our performances. Many talented boys and girls work behind the scenes and many—not so talented—just work. I have seen these young people so dirty that you wonder if they will ever come clean, so tired that they can hardly walk, sit out in a dark auditorium to criticize the fruits of their labor. Some one says, "That doesn't look right. Let's do it over," or sometimes, "Let's try it another way." They do it over to their

(Continued on page 31)



# LOOK! NO NERVES!

By **FREDDIE MILAM SAUNDERS**

"**M**OTHER! Oh, Mother!" Nancy burst into the hall from school at noon.

"Yes, dear."

"Oh, Mother, I got the lead in the senior play!"

"Why, Nancy, how wonderful."

"Oh, no!" came the anguished wail from Father. "Not that again."

"Why, Dad!"

"Well, if we are going to have to go through the same hysteria we went through when Lorene was a senior, I'm going fishing. I'm too old to survive another siege like that. Out all night, no time to study, all that hullabaloo about costumes, so tired she cried if you looked at her. Oh, no, not again."

While Father may be exaggerating, we have to admit that the senior play is usually a pretty strenuous thing for the student-actor and his family, as well as the director. But it need not be so. There is a way to produce a good play with a minimum of strain on academic standing, physical strength, social life, and nerves.

What caused Father such unhappy memories of Lorene's stardom? Instead of remembering the night of triumph with all the comments on the beauty and talent of the Bernhardt, junior grade, all he can remember is how the family had lived in confusion for weeks, while Lorene drove herself in four different directions at once. Lorene was a good student, who usually made good grades. She also was a popular girl, with dates and parties every week. She belonged to three clubs, and was an officer in two. She was a member of the student council and of the annual staff. Then all she had to do was crowd in a class play. All the troubles that upset Father were really time troubles. Lorene and the other members of the cast had not stopped to realize that they could not go on spending the same amount of time on studying, clubs, movies, eating, sleeping, and just fooling around, and still have time to do a good job on the class play.

Obviously, if an already busy student is to get in one more major activity, something has to give. Each student will have to decide for himself whether he will cut down on his social activities, his sleep, or what. But there is one place where a definite time-saving can be made. That is on the play itself. If all the time wasted in the usual production of a class play were eliminated, then less cutting on other activities would be necessary.



**Still Shines the Star**, Troupe 84, Princeton, W. Va., High School, Irene Norris, Director.

What would you say if you were told that a highly successful class play had been produced with only twelve rehearsals, each only an hour and a half in length? Would it explain matters or only make you more skeptical to know that at these twelve rehearsals not a single person was absent or tardy? This means that not only did the students report to practice promptly, but also the director had the work so planned that the group could be dismissed on time. All of this may seem difficult, if not impossible to accomplish, but it is really the easy way. Directors are always interested in improved techniques in play-production, but high school students too will cooper-

ate with a reasonable plan, reasonably presented. Of course the director has the best opportunity to take the lead in planning for closer organization, but the co-operation of students and their parents is essential. It should never be hard to get this cooperation, once all concerned see that this plan is one whereby everyone wins, nobody loses.

Some of the specific time troubles that made Lorene's play a nightmare were these:

1. No definite date was set at the beginning for the presentation of the play. Students, feeling no immediate pressure, did not get down to work, and the whole thing dragged on eight weeks.
2. There was no announced rehearsal schedule. When the director attempted to set a time for the next rehearsal, there was always someone who had a date or could not attend for some other reason.
3. Tardiness was so bad that actors expected work to start thirty minutes or more later than the time set, so none of them bothered much about being on time.
4. There was no set time for dismissal. A student could wander home at two in the morning and swear he had been at play practice, even though it had been dismissed hours earlier.
5. Rehearsals were difficult because those not on the stage sat around and talked, disturbing the ones on the stage. Bringing their dates to rehearsal was particularly disturbing.

Each of these troubles involved wasted time, but each can be avoided. Since we cannot really add hours to the day when we get into a new activity, we need to manage the time we have to best advantage. The very first thing to do, even before try-outs, is for the director and the planning committee to decide on a date for the play, and a not-far-distant date, at that. Setting this date and announcing it to the world is the best way to burn bridges of dalliance behind us. Everyone will see the necessity of getting down to work if it has already been announced in the village weekly that the class play will be given on a date that is quite near. Just how long should be allowed for preparing the play is a question each director will have to decide for himself. It has been the experience of this writer that four rehearsals a week for three weeks will produce best results, but others may work differently. The

(Continued on page 30)

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## ARENA STAGING:

# LIGHTING CONTROL

By **TED SKINNER**

**T**HE best lighting equipment available is useful to the extent of its controllability. The importance of the right kind of switchboard is therefore not to be underestimated.

If you are setting up your arena theatre on a large stage, you will have access to the switchboard located there. Even if you are fortunate enough to have a stage large enough to house an arena theatre, you may find that your switchboard is lacking in flexibility. A high percentage of switchboards are inflexible in that most of the dimmer controls are wired directly to three circuits of footlights, three circuits of three borderlight strips, and possibly an additional set of cyclo-rama units. There often remain but a few, if any, *free* dimmers with which to control the spotlights. If you have such a set-up, it is suggested that you have a competent electrician rewire your board so that the dimmer controls now wired directly to the foots and borderlights can be used for other circuits as well.

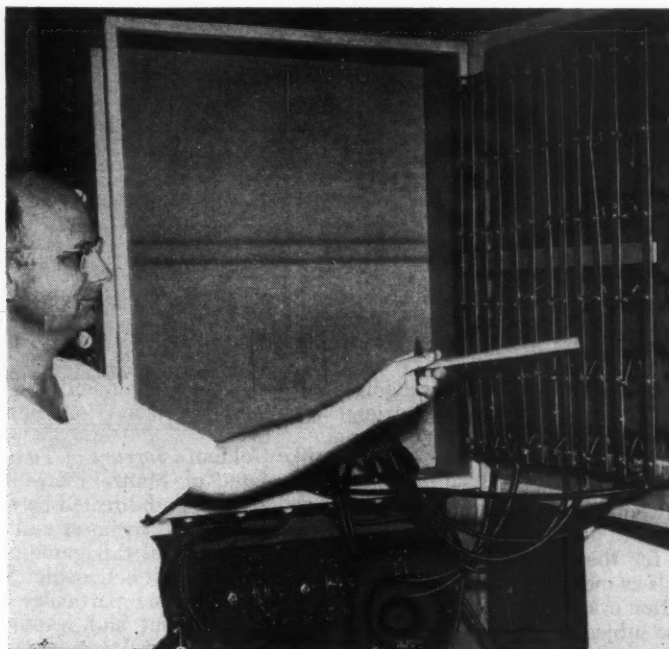
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Dr. Ted Skinner, Chairman of the Department of Speech at Texas College of Arts and Industries, points out the construction of the plugging panel-board, which was assembled at the college. The portable Powerstat Package Dimmer is seen below the panelboard.

In most cases you will be housing your arena theatre apart from the main auditorium and will therefore want to secure a suitable portable switchboard. The Theatre Production Service catalog, as well as those of other dealers, shows a number of portable boards with a wide range in price. In the control of the lighting for a small stage or an arena theatre, it is preferable to have a number of dimmers of 1000W capacity rather than fewer dimmers of higher wattage. The dimmer we selected for our arena theatre at Texas College of Arts and Industries is the POWERSTAT PACKAGE DIMMER consisting of 6 non-interlocking variable transformer dimmers. This portable board lists for \$425.00.

It is most important that you have a completely flexible setup. In order to realize this desired flexibility, we built a plugging panel consisting of six rows of six Hubbell No. 7526 female bases, making a total of 36 receptacles. Each row of six plugs is wired to parallel copper strips which are in turn connected to a cable ending in a male plug, which is plugged into one of the outlets on the portable board. Each dimmer handles six units in this manner. The number six was decided upon in order that we could control 6 150W reflector spots or floods, or a total of 900 watts with each 1000W dimmer. By changing the plugging set-up, it is possible to control any combination of six spots with each dimmer. The plugging panel is mounted on a discarded art work table with space left on top of the table for the switchboard; the table is mounted on casters in order to be easily moved. In our case, 25 feet of Type OS Heavy Service Portable Cord

3 conductor No. 6 is sufficient to carry the power from the electric supply panel to the board. A Hubbell No. 7977 cap angle goes on the end of the cable to be plugged into a Hubbell No. 7990 50 amp 3 wire power receptacle which is connected to the power supply.

We now have a second POWERSTAT PACKAGE DIMMER ordered which will enable us to double the wattage of our spots. In other words, we will be able to use the 300W R-40 lamps in all of the 36 units if so desired. In order to keep the flexible control, we will bring off the 36 outlets of the plugging panelboard in groups of three, thus utilizing the 12 dimmers of the two switchboards.

In case you are locating your arena theatre in a gymnasium or some other area in which the stage is some distance from the nearest outlet box, it is suggested that the switchboard unit be placed near the stage area (perhaps next to one of the entrance aisles) in order to reduce the number of feet of cable from the plugging boxes (described previously) to the switchboard plugging board. It will be much less expensive to purchase additional feet of the one cable leading from the power supply to the switchboard than to increase the length of 36 cables. Also, the switchboard operator should be in a position to view the stage. Naturally, the switchboard area must be masked from view of the audience. This can be accomplished by the use of flats. If this area can be elevated, it will make the electrician's job easier.

As we turn our attention to setting the lights to cover the acting area, we must review certain principles. *First*, we are

(Continued on page 29)



## SECONDARY SCHOOL

# DRAMA

## IN HOLLAND

By GERALD TYLER

It will be noticed as the high schools of the various European countries come under review that the conditions of work and therefore the conditions for school drama follow a very similar pattern. In these schools the Headmaster and his staff are all so vitally concerned for the educational progress of the pupils as measured by their ability to pass written examinations in a number of academic subjects that there is little or no place in the curriculum for experiment or for the study of off the syllabus subjects which broaden the outlook and develop the personality of the pupil. There is no time for dramatic work except in the lower forms of the school. This is not to say that the study of drama is disregarded; in fact in Holland it is highly thought of and plays an honoured and important part in the life of the school. A prominent Dutch educationalist speaking of drama in Amsterdam said that the education authorities believed that through the practice of drama and in the overcoming of its many problems children came to learn many things both material and spiritual and that through acting they came to an understanding of other people and themselves. It was their belief that plays were meant to be acted and to this end all new schools in the city are being provided with a hall and stage for the purpose.

In the lower forms they often dramatise incidents from their lessons, making their own plays and writing their own scripts, groups of pupils in the class each being responsible for separate scenes.

The Junior schools have their regular class periods of drama and, of course, in places like the Rudolf Steiner schools it is often part of their normal activity teaching method but in the Dutch Grammar Schools the drama work centres around the Toneel Club, the School Dramatic Society.

There is a good deal of play reading and play study both as a club activity and as part of the ordinary literature lesson; in fact not only Dutch plays but plays in French, German and English are studied in the respective language lessons.

The Toneel Club is usually managed by a Committee of students who, no doubt with a little guidance at times, choose the plays for production. Plays



*Turandot* by Jan Engelman.

like Goldoni's *Servant of Two Masters* or the farce of Maitre Pierre Patelin are chosen, cast and directed by the students themselves and keenness and enthusiasm for the whole of this game of play production are most noticeable. Some of the members of one particular group had stage aspirations and wanted to go to one of the special academies providing for a professional career but the majority were interested from an amateur point of view. Entry to the Dramatic Academy is highly selective, in striking contrast to the situation in England. Of the fifty students who present themselves as candidates for entry each year about ten are provisionally admitted for the first term of four months after which a final selection is made. Approximately six students obtain the Academy's leaving certificate each year but here is another contrast — they leave the Academy practically assured that a regular place awaits them in one of the professional companies.

Some of the Grammar School drama enthusiasts move on to the Universities where one or more drama societies solicit their membership. Here they will get their chance, for while the Dutch professional theatre is solidly alive but exhibiting no exciting new or revolutionary ideas in the theatre, it is left to the Uni-

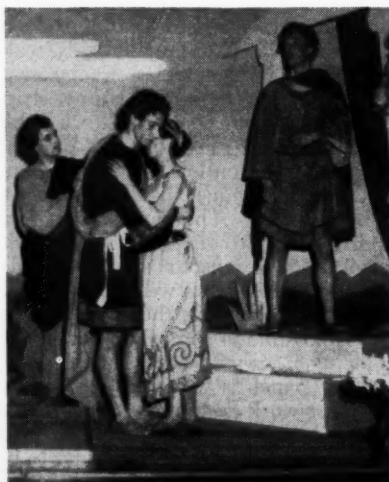
versities to explore the progressive tendencies in acting and production and to perform those plays which the professional stage for practical reasons cannot perform or which because of the views expressed might not be acceptable to the theatre-going public.

The Amateur Theatre in this small country is represented by about four thousand societies, a number which proclaims the strength and interest in drama to be found everywhere, providing a ready made opening for the boys and girls leaving the schools and the Universities.

Supplementary the work of the school Toneel Groups are the special school productions directed by one of the masters as an out of school activity. These productions usually take place annually with performances given to the school and the parents. The plays most to be seen are either those of the Dutch classical writer, Vondel, a well-known play by a foreign author or by more recent policy a play by a modern Dutch playwright. Holland has no playwrights whose reputations extend beyond her borders except perhaps Vondel and Heyermans and it is noticeable that in the repertoires of the professional companies as well as in the school productions that the plays are largely translations of the works of foreign writers — Shakespeare, Pirandello, Shaw, Charles Morgan, Noel Coward, Moliere, Lorca and others. There is, however, a movement afoot to popularise modern Dutch plays and to encourage new playwrights, a movement which is supported by the Universities, the schools and the amateur theatre.

The school plays are cast from among specially selected pupils and rehearsals take place over two or three months. The general practice is for the schools to design and make their own scenery but period costumes, because of the expense involved, are usually hired.

The photographs show a typical rather shallow school stage in a multi-purpose hall equipped with curtains and borders which may with the aid of a few pieces of furniture provide the scene or which may more usually be used in conjunction with a backcloth or backing of stage flats



*Amphitryon* by Kleist.



FOR INTERNATIONAL THEATRE MONTH

## SIMPLE SIMON

by AURAND HARRIS

A young, innocent stranger comes to visit a totalitarian country, where no one thinks without the Queen's permission. He soon falls afoul of some of the Queen's arbitrary rules, and is thrown into prison, escapes execution by apologizing to the Queen, but pricked by his conscience, he whispers the truth into the ground. Miraculously, a tree grows from his whisper, and as it grows, its branches sing the truth aloud to the sky — "The Queen is a tyrant!" Once again he is sentenced to execution, when by the exercise of his natural talents, he is able to save the Princess' life, and the Queen learns that the personal freedom of her subjects is precious to the kingdom.

Cast: Four women, seven men, courtiers and townspeople.

Scenes: A single set, in the courtyard of the palace.

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to suggest the locality. Typical productions are illustrated here, a scene from *Amphitryon* by Kleist, a scene from Jan Engelmann's *Turandot* and a scene from Wilde's *Importance of being Earnest* performed in modern costume.

The Dutch are to be congratulated on having such a close link between their professional companies and the schools as that provided by the "Organisation for School Theatre," whose board of management consists of Headmasters and representatives of the Education Department and which decides the plays which are to be given special performance. These plays are performed at the regular theatres out of school hours and the pupils are able to attend at specially reduced prices. Very occasionally the pupils do go to the theatre in a body during school hours as they did, for example, as a special Christmas trip to see *Goodbye Mr. Chips*.

Parties of school children also attend the Ballet Group, "Scapino," and the Puck Company, both companies whose special function is to perform suitable ballets and plays for young audiences.

At the International Theatre Congress at The Hague this year the members of the Congress were invited to a performance of the "Scapino" Ballet Group where they saw *Once upon a time*, a pot-pourri of fairy tale figures and *The Real Princess*, after the Hans Anderson fairy tale of the Princess on a pea, before an

audience of five to ten year olds followed by a programme of classical ballet before an audience of secondary school children. Before the ballet the senior children were given a demonstration of the principal ballet positions and a short exposition to enable them to appreciate what they were going to see.

There was also a performance by the Puck Company, a band of young actors whose methods of acting and presentation were reminiscent of those of the Young Vic Company, of *The Wise Tom Cat* described by its author Henrich Heyermans as a malicious fairy tale. The work of Heyermans is not widely known

outside his own country but the interest shown in this performance was such that *The Wise Tom Cat* is likely to appear in a number of foreign repertories of Children's Theatre before very long. This group of virile players under Vim Vesseur and Cas Baas are exerting a strong influence upon the Grammar School drama and indeed upon the whole trend of Dutch theatre. A typical week's programme shows them playing in Amsterdam, Middenmeer, Kampen and Nijmegen giving eight performances of a repertory including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Joseph in Dotham* (Vondel), *The Wise Tom Cat* (Heyermans) and *The Secret of the Prince* by Cas Baas.

One leaves this country of hospitable, friendly people with the feeling that if they have few great dramatists to offer to the world and little that is startling to show in the established professional theatre yet the theatre is well alive and it is a vital part of the life of the boys and girls. One feels too that what they may have lacked through the absence of native drama they have gained through their contact with the world's best, producing a standard of taste in the average theatre-goer which seems denied to countries like England where so much mediocrity is offered. And finally one is left wondering at what secondary school in England or America would one be entertained by a group of seventeen-year-olds who would discuss world drama intelligently in a foreign language.



*The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde.

# I Make COSTUMES

By DORIS MARSOLAIS MARSHALL

The Hi! Teen-Hi!

Club

was jumping!

The Juke

Box

was

thumping out "I Wish I Had a Paper Doll," jazzily, crazily a voice was beating a thumpy-thump rhythm; the pattern was being repeated outside the high windows of our back-room workshop by millions of swirling snowflakes as they courtesied, nodded, hastily, lazily, languidly or gleefully to each other.

One lingered a moment to caress the smooth window pane and greeted softly,

See, I dance in My Costume  
of Sparkling White with all its  
tiny diamonds and prisms of  
light! Etch my design,  
It's a delight!  
Frost's kiss for a before  
Christmas Night!

The noise, the happy high-pitched laughter, seemed far-away as we sat busily engaged with the projects at hand!

The hum of the second-hand Singer Sewing Machine grew into a song; a song not unlike the one so busily spinning on "Jukie" across the Circle playing

Paper Doll? Well, maybe —  
For we too were playing! —  
Making ready to robe  
Make-Believe!  
How well all God's patterns  
fit!

The hum of the machine increased and outside the snowflakes got bigger and thicker!

Such activity! — Mighty, Merry!



**The Birthday of a King**, Troupe 931, Newark, Del., High School, Ann M. Stauter, Sponsor.



**The Promised One**, Troupe 11, St. Clara Academy, Sinsinawa, Wis., Sister M. Angele, O. P., Director.

The gold flecks in the hazel eyes of the girl sitting pedaling the mechanical genius seemed to grow into burnished gold, and, grim determination accompanied each tread as she unconsciously picked up, hummingly, "I wish I had a paper doll!"

"Hum-m!" said Shep;

"Hum-ph," said I!

I who had been coerced into trying my big hands to mold an armor out of CELASTIC for the not-far-enough-away-for-all-the-work-there-was-to-do! Early spring production of St. Joan! (Difficult production? Yes, but we have the gal who can really play St. Joan as Shaw might even like)

and

"Double humph,"

I repeated as I dipped some special material into a smelly solution producing a slimy substance that was ready to be molded into heroic grandeur!

Shep's whiskers sorta twitched though he kept his homely face quite straight and said,

You asked for it, Pal! Who ever heard of a manly-man, yeah, a "B" squad letterman, letting a Gal talk him into making costumes? Say just



**Too Much Mistletoe**, Troupe 149, Paragould, Ark., Sr. High School, Mrs. W. J. Stone, Director.

how unlovely can Puppy-love get! Don't look at me. I haven't been paying a dog-gone to her snooty-pooch "Masks." She looks more like a raccoon than a dog, and I simply don't give a cent for gals that wear so much perfume!

His gaze went past "Masks" and he looked even more dismayed as he remarked with canine candor:

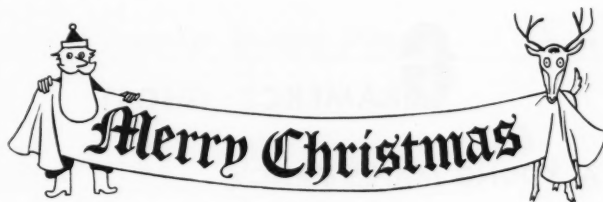
Look at Charley! Some horse for work! Sewing those velvet cyes — Oh, well, guess a man can get hemmed up in more ways than one! What if that sack needle is too hard for the girls! Just being pushed around!

Say, pal, that armor looks neat — Isn't that stuff super? Boy, that's fast work! Already dry, too — So light I can push it with my nose! Yet it's tough and strong. Good idea leaving holes so you can lace the front and back together! You going to paint it, too? I'll bet a girl couldn't do that very well. Bet it will look neater than the barn you painted on the ranch. It's snug and warm in here! Cozy! Real nice to see a bunch of punk kids doing something constructive together! But then, I guess sophomores should be taking on responsibilities!

Life isn't all play even tho "The Play's the Thing."

"Coke, anyone? Milkshake? A Wingding-ling? I'm buzzing out to Sweden Creme for some heavy refreshments! Get out your dazzling dimes! Prepare for the blast!"

A breath of clean winter's air made Shep's nose wriggle, but he stretched out by the register, sighed, shut one eye—for a dog-nap; Maybe to dream! He knew we were in for several more hours of steady work and so we were! Donna was poring over an historic costume book on the 1400 period in France and checking on the authenticity of the costume pattern for the Dauphin while Bonnie, scissors in hand, and several old issues of the N. Y. SUNDAY TIMES (No.



Another Holiday season is here, which means another year is almost ended.

To you, the readers of "Dramatics", we say thanks for the privilege of serving you, and to each of you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

BAKER'S



PLAYS

569 BOYLSTON ST., BOSTON 16, MASS.

indeed, not the Drama Section 'cause that we save!) was preparing to shape an original pattern, for she had pinned a picture from THEATRE ARTS on her work table and genius was gleaming in merry blue eyes that reflected the dimpled happiness of bright red chubby cheeks. She was having fun! (Wasn't asked to the dance anyway!)

I saw Shep's sleepy eye open and he cocked his good ear to hear Bonnie tell Donna:

This will be a swell place to use that satin drape material we got at Delight's Dept. Store on last August's Sale. My, isn't it shiny and smooth! Would make a beautiful Prom dress! Not that I'm going! Only Decoration Chairman! That's me!

Do you think it as pretty a piece as the oyster-white we use for Nerissa's gown in The Merchant of Venice? You know Mother had so much fun helping me make it! It was almost prettier than Portia's gown. Boy, that wasn't too good! So many things to watch for in costuming! You know, I'd like to go into Costume Design for the Theatre? Maybe for the movies or television! You know there are lots of things to do in the theatre besides acting. Now, let's see, this piece will do for one of the minor characters in St. Joan.

Shep sat up sharply. He was dismayed! Disgruntled!

Minor character, indeed! Hadn't teacher told them, "We have no minor characters. Each one is equally important to the whole! Of course we have to have the protagonist, and I guess, as in real life, he must stand out more!" There must always be leaders and followers! Heroes and supernumeraries!

\* \* \*

Shep wagged his nose again — Stood an ear up at half-mast and commented quite logically,

'Twould be great to have a class in Dramatic Arts and some of this labor-of-love stuff could be done then! of course . . .

He continued,

I know that it takes hours and hours of extra work in dramatics, too. But anything so important, interesting and time-absorbing should be in a well-rounded curriculum!

All the subjects in school are needed to produce a play (Boy, what a dog-goned wise observation, if I do say it myself, and I do)

Your young Principal is so up-and-coming. I'm surprised he hasn't got on the ball in this respect! I just guess I'll have some per-

tinient conversation with Scholar (that's his "Pedigreed" dog, you know) and see if some for-better-education action can be taken! Guess I'll take a little stroll to see what Donna is doing now! My, my, still poring thru that costume book. Don't know why so much time, she's good enuf without any books! Oh, I see, she's showing Jolene. Jolene just came in from the Christmas Crystal Ball at the Civic Center! Dancing? Naw! Stage Crew did the lighting! Now she's back to check on the colors of the materials for the Xmas pageant so she can make the just-right gelatin filters — (gonna use the new long lasting gelatin, too). Guess I'll just look at the book while they're matching samples. It's a good thing I can read more than Piggildy-Wiggildy Latin! Hum — What People Wore, a visual history of Dress by Douglas Gorsline — (Viking Press). Say, that's a swell book for H. S. students! Lots of pictures! Woops, she's back. Hope I haven't lost her place! Oh, oh! — I did! Come on, Donna, it's past the chapter on Egypt, past that Roman costume section — Now to France! See that page? — That's where my Buddy got his idea for St. Joan's Armor!

(Continued on page 28)



# **G**RAMERCY GHOST

A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY

JENNY KISSED ME

THE CURIOUS SAVAGE

MR. BARRY'S ETCHINGS

CUCKOOS ON THE HEARTH

SORRY, WRONG NUMBER

THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER

RAMSHACKLE INN

DEAR RUTH

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

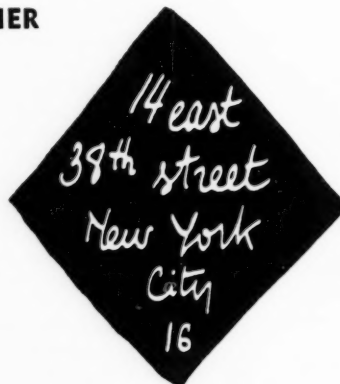
YEARS AGO

ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

JUNIOR MISS

LIFE WITH FATHER

STAGE DOOR



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(High School Version)

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*Drawing through courtesy of Gluyas Williams*

**The Story.** Mr. Banks learns that one of the young men he has seen occasionally about the house is about to become his son-in-law. Daughter Kay announces the engagement out of a clear sky. Mrs. Banks and the two Banks boys are very happy, but Mr. Banks is in a dither. The groom-to-be, Buckley Dunstan, appears on the scene and Mr. Banks realizes that the engagement is serious. Buckley and Kay insist they will not go through the expensive foolishness of a "big" wedding. Just a simple affair with a few friends! We soon learn, however, that the "few" friends idea is definitely out! But Kay has promised Buckley a quiet wedding in a little vine-covered church, and no fuss. Then trouble **really** begins. Mrs. Banks and the boys and the girl friend of one of the boys, and even Mr. Banks himself make up their own lists of guests who must be invited. And no self-respecting girl can be shabbily dressed, and Mrs. Banks will not be satisfied with lemonade and a few sandwiches! A professional caterer is called in; then professional florists, furniture movers, and dressmakers; and the whole procession begins to take over. Mr. Banks' secretary is called in to assume charge of the complicated lists of friends and relatives who just can't be left out. Mr. Banks' terror over the prospect of the cost mounts in a crescendo, as the lists grow. The house simply won't hold all the people listed, since everyone in the family secretly tampers with the card file and upsets the secretary's plans. Buckley quarrels with Kay because she has not kept her promise that the wedding shall be simple and the guests only a few close friends. Kay in a fit of temper calls off the wedding and Buckley leaves in despair, having himself forgotten to turn in an extra list of guests made up by his family. Of course, the lovers' quarrel is patched up and preparations for the wedding proceed. The entire ground floor of the house has been cleared for action by the caterers just before the church services. Aunts and uncles arrive in town, get lost or can't find taxis; wedding presents fill the living room to overflowing; and Kay's brothers frantically look for lost cuff-links and clean shirts when they are already late in attending to their duties as ushers. Mr. Banks, having reached the depths of hopelessness, seems incapable of thought or action. But just before he leaves for the church with Kay, he gets his reward when he realizes that his daughter is getting what she wants and what every bride should have when she leaves her family and starts out on the next stage in her life as a woman. So Kay, after shedding tears in her father's arms, smiles, straightens her shoulders, and taking Mr. Banks' arm, walks to the door with him as Banks asks her if she is now ready. "Let's go knock 'em dead!" she says as the curtain falls.

## DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, Inc.

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By PAUL MYERS

**T**EA seems to be the magic brew in the Broadway theatre at the present time. Not too long ago, it was associated only with English drawing-room comedy and its introduction set the note for well-bred witticisms. Its titular presence in two recent hits has made us think more highly of the dramatic potentialities of the beverage.

Robert Anderson's *Tea and Sympathy* is very comfortably established at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre. As the wife of a school-teacher involved in a romance with one of the students, Deborah Kerr is proving her ability to carry a role on the stage as well as on the screen. It has too established Robert Anderson as one of our most important new dramatists.

Quite a different cup of tea is *The Teahouse of the August Moon*, adapted by John Patrick from the novel by Vern Sneider. Mr. Patrick is at his best when



Louis Gossett and Maxine Sullivan of Louis Peterson's *Take a Giant Step*, now on Broadway.

writing of men in war. His *The Hasty Heart*, written out of his own experiences with the American Field Service, remains both a gripping play and a profound message. In his new work he has depicted the two cultures that are merged under the United States' occupation of Okinawa. Maurice Evans, still appearing locally in *Dial M for Murder*, figures as co-producer of Mr. Patrick's play with George Schaffer. John Forsythe (who played the leading role in one of the Mr. Roberts companies and therefore knows this part of the world well) is doing one of the principal roles here. David Wayne and Mariko Niki represent the important Oriental figures in the production.

A new producing team has brought onto the local stage two works within a month of each other. Lyn Austin and Thomas Noyes first offered *Take a Giant*

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*Step* by Louis Peterson. Mr. Peterson is also a newcomer to the ranks of Broadway playwrights and his play sets him as a personage of great promise. The locale of *Take a Giant Step* is a Connecticut town; the time is today. Spencer Scott is not only a teen-age boy with all of the problems that each teen-age boy thinks are peculiarly his own, but he is also a Negro. The latter of course does add to his difficulties but the beauty of *Take a Giant Step* is its universality. The difficulty that Spencer has in solving his problems and in finding some one in whom he can confide make up the substance of the play.

Louis Gossett, who is making his stage debut as Spencer Scott, is giving a remarkably sensitive performance. As a theatregoer I voice the hope that he can be wrested from pursuing a career in pharmacy (which the program notes inform us is his choice) and continue in the theatre. Fred O'Neal and Estelle Helmsley give fine performances as the youth's father and grandmother. John Stix did the direction. All are to be commended for a most interesting production.

The second production from Austin and Noyes did not meet with the success of *Take a Giant Step*, though I found it a very enjoyable work. Nathaniel Benchley's *The Frogs of Spring* is a play that has very limited appeal. Those of us who live and endeavor to raise children in

city apartments will find much that is amusing in the exploits of the Allens and the Beldens. These families live in adjoining city buildings with a bit of green at the back. Burgess Meredith directed a cast headed by Hiram Sherman, Haila Stoddard, Anthony Ross and Barbara Baxley.

The Equity-Library Theatre, that valuable showcase for acting and directorial talent, has begun its new season with a production of Giraudoux's *The Madwoman of Chaillot*. It was a great disappointment to me when the production of Bernard Shaw's *The Philanderer* was cancelled. *The Madwoman* will be followed, however, by Albert Bein's *Heavenly Express*.

Ere you read this two of my favorite actresses will bow in New York. Josephine Hull will open in *The Solid Gold Cadillac*; Lillian Gish, in *The Trip to Bountiful* by Horton Foote. On Wednesday evening, Mary Martin and Charles Boyer open at the Alvin in *Kind Sir* from the typewriter of Norman Krasna. These three premieres will certainly add stature to our theatre.

The off-Broadway theatre is flourishing too. *The World of Sholom Aleichem* continues at the Barbizon-Plaza. In Greenwich Village, Originals Only is presenting *One Foot to the Sea* by Harold Levitt and *Have You Heard This One* is at the Cherry Lane Theatre.





THE battle within the film industry over processes and wide screens and three-dimensions continues. Everyone on the production side of the business seems to have lost sight of the fact that the public doesn't care so much about what technique is used in the making of the film as in the merit of the film. As television therefore gradually increases its artistry more and more people are staying at home for their entertainment. Each of the major Hollywood studios has announced a very much shorter production schedule for the season ahead than has been the custom.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has come up with another fine musical movie in *Kiss Me Kate*. Though not quite up to the mark set by their *The Band Wagon* (a mark which would be hard to duplicate), the film based upon the musical show by Sam and Bella Spewack, with a Cole Porter score, is a wonderfully entertaining job. Many of you will recall that the work owed a great debt to Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. The plot revolves, in its singularly complex way, about the personal problems of a company of actors involved in a production of the Elizabethan comedy.

Dorothy Kingsley's screen play has been very faithful to the original. Only a prelude in which Ron Randall, purporting to be Cole Porter, is shown auditioning part of the score for the actors has been added. The score of the film is almost identical with that of the stage work. I was seriously disappointed, however, that "Bianca" was used only as background music. My favorite lyric of the show occurred in that tune — the one affirming that:



Kathryn Grayson and Howard Keel (center) in a production number of MGM's *Kiss Me Kate*.

"I would gladly give up coffee for Sanka Even Sanka, Bianca, for you."

Kathryn Grayson seemed to lack some of the fire of Katherine the Shrew, but handled the musical section beautifully. Howard Keel does very nicely as Fred Graham, the Petruchio of the play within the play. Ann Miller and Tommy Rall do great things with the roles of Lola Lane and Bill Calhoun. If Hollywood ever gets around to a film version of *Pal Joey*, Mr. Rall is the man for the leading role. Finally, Keenan Wynn and James Whitmore get all of the humor out of the thugs and their rendering of *Brush Up Your Shakespeare* is a high spot of the film. M-G-M has made both a 3-D and a conventional version of *Kiss Me Kate*. Both should entertain all and sundry!

United Artists' *Song of the Land* is a documentary film that doesn't quite come off. It seems to be an attempt to do for the firmament what *The Sea Around Us* did for the waters. The narration is very high-sounding and we are told at the

outset that the film "is the story of life and of creation, a cosmic cycle that has occurred countless times in the two billion years of earth's existence."

There are some extremely interesting sequences about the almost extinct California condor. Both the filming and the description of the life cycle of these birds has an authenticity and interest which the remainder of the film lacks. *Song of the Land* was produced and directed by Henry S. Kesler. Ed. N. Harrison and Frances Roberts did the photography.

Cowboys and Indians have fascinated movie-makers since the birth of the industry. *Captain John Smith and Pocahontas* is, as the title states, a telling of the famous adventure of the early seventeenth century and the Jamestown colony. Hollywood has played rather loosely with historical detail and the purists will, I fear, be rather disturbed over Anthony Dexter's portrayal of the fabulous Captain Smith. Jody Lawrence endeavors to make a very paste-board Pocahontas a credible figure.

Another historical film, but one that remains in the realm of fiction, is *All the Brothers Were Valiant*. Harry Brown, whose play, a *Sound of Hunting*, remains one of the best dramas to emerge from World War II, has adapted the screen play from the novel by Ben Ames Williams. Metro has assembled a star-filled cast to bring us the tale of the men who comprised part of the great whaling fleets that sailed out of New Bedford, Massachusetts, about a century ago.

Other new films have been Paramount's *Botany Bay* with James Mason, Alan Ladd and Patricia Medina; Edward Small's production (released through United Artists) of *The Steel Lady*, which is set in the Sahara and involves some unregenerate Nazis and oil lands, and Warner Brothers' *Calamity Jane* with Doris Day in the title role. The last owes more than a little to *Annie Get Your Gun* for its mood and style.



Tommy Rall, Ann Miller, Kathryn Grayson and Howard Keel doing "We Open in Venice" from MGM's *Kiss Me Kate*.



The Silver Cord, Troupe 1039, Phillips High School, Chicago, Ill., Bessie Coat Wirth, Director.

### THE SILVER CORD

Wendell Phillips High School, Chicago, Illinois

**P**RODUCING *The Silver Cord* was a wonderful experience for everyone: cast, audience, and director.

As the director I feel that it was definitely the most satisfying of all my productions, because it was the hardest. The actors learned that to do a play well they had to yield themselves to the director, that doing a play like *The Silver Cord* was more than learning lines and using careful diction. They learned that the fun of acting was losing oneself to become someone else though it meant going over a scene until we all almost dropped from weariness and then going over it once more and often still once more.

We had tried doing it the year before, but because the cast failed to do more than learn the lines I decided it was too difficult for a high school cast and refused to present it. However, this cast (all new) begged me to let them try it, and everyone is happy that I did.

One drama critic who saw it said that not for one minute did he remember that the members of the cast were only high school students. They lived every moment of the play. The audience gave such perfect attention that not a subtlety was lost.

BESSIE COAT WIRTH, Sponsor,  
Troupe 1039

### GEORGE WASHINGTON SLEPT HERE

Central High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

**A**S AN ardent admirer of George Kaufman and Moss Hart for years, I have wanted to produce this comedy but hesitated because of the drinking, the profanity and the maid's role — situations found too often in Broadway shows

which make them unsuitable for high school production. Finally, with the aid of a little ingenuity and a lot of red pencil I found by changing some scenes and eliminating others entirely that the play lost nothing of its humor and yet proved inoffensive to anyone. As proof of this statement here are excerpts from notes sent to me by faculty members the morning after the play:

"Complete success . . . interesting, entertaining evening . . . superb performance . . . strictly fine . . . audience with you all the way . . . best I've ever seen at Central . . ." In my fifteen years of coaching plays at Central high school I have never worked with a cast with such esprit d' corps. Each member of

## PLAYS OF THE MONTH

Edited By EARL BLANK

the cast from Katie, the cook, with a "walk on" to Mr. Fuller, the lead, made his character come alive on the stage the night of the performance. And rehearsals were such fun that the cast was sorry when they ended. Believe it or not, so was I. Usually we give a drama for our senior play — but this year I thought a comedy would be better. There's so much unhappiness in the world today I thought a little laughter may go well. How right I was . . . our audience proved that. The cast felt that they had actually "left them laughing." I recommend *George Washington Slept Here* to all senior high schools . . . and that's no LIE!

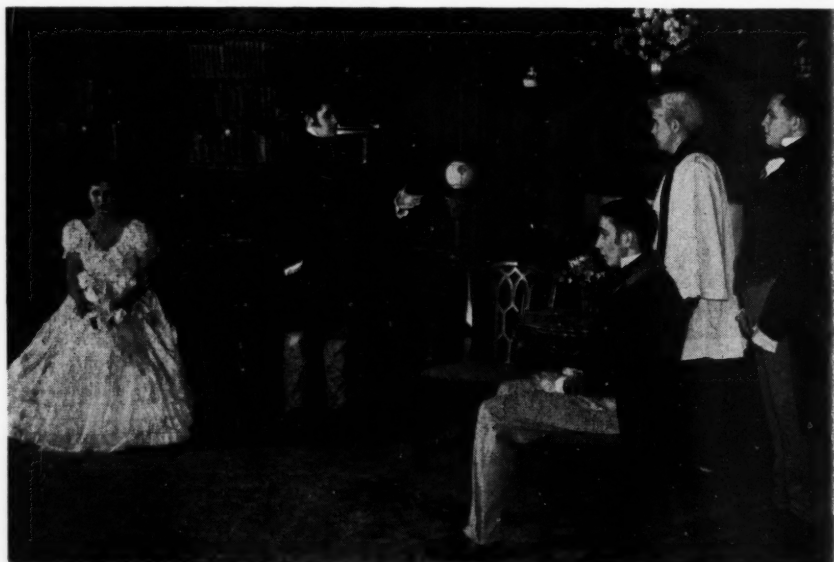
MAYBELLE CONGER, Sponsor, Troupe 822

### JANE EYRE

Central Catholic High School, Canton, Ohio

**J**ANE EYRE presented a formidable challenge to Central Catholic's Thespian Troupe 580 and their director. We met it. Our 150 hours of intensive preparation was gloriously rewarded with a production acclaimed excellent in every respect by two enthusiastic adult audiences numbering approximately 2500.

The co-stars "Jane" and "Rochester" — and they were stars! — claimed no superiority over the 14 supporting members of the cast. The "mysterious woman," appearing but once and with no speaking part, was judged adept in her role on and off stage; indeed every actor of the play excelled in interpretation of



Jane Eyre, Troupe 580, Central Catholic High School, Canton, Ohio, Sister M. Beatrice, H. H. M. V., Sponsor and Director.

JANE EYRE  
THE SILVER CORD  
WHY THE CHIMES RANG  
GEORGE WASHINGTON SLEPT HERE

character. A ten-year-old child played Rochester's ward.

The setting was typically Victorian with Thornfield Hall in six scenes and the Moor House in one. The change was made in twelve minutes.

Generous cooperation of Central's 870 students in the sale of personal and business patron and general admission tickets made possible a net profit of \$2,350. Expenses amounted to \$750. This covered the rental of auditorium and costumes, drayage, printing, prizes for ticket sales, scenery and make-up.

*Jane Eyre* was a joy to produce and will long be remembered at Central as an educational, dramatic, social and financial success.

DOROTHY COSTEA, Secretary, Troupe 580

—O—

#### WHY THE CHIMES RANG

Prescott, Arizona, Senior High School

EVERY year at Christmas time, the townsfolk of Prescott, Arizona, look forward to the high school production of *Why the Chimes Rang*. Twenty years ago, the curtain went up on the first presentation of this inspiring drama. The properties and costumes at that time were limited and very crude, but through the years they have been improved and

#### PUBLISHERS

The Silver Cord, *Why the Chimes Rang*, Samuel French, N. Y. C.  
Jane Eyre, The Dramatic Publishing Company, Chicago, and Samuel French, N. Y. C.  
George Washington Slept Here, Dramatists Play Service, N. Y. C.

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Annually the directors have an intensive tryout period for this play. They search through the elementary schools for the wistful, appealing boy who plays the lead. In high school, competition is keen for all parts, but especially for the challenging role of the Old Woman.

The greatest technical problem is lighting the play so as to create three different moods: the crude, firelit cottage, the massive, candle-lighted cathedral, and the ethereal light from heaven beaming on the angel.

The high school choral group, singing Christmas carols before the play begins, enhances the atmosphere of joy and adoration. When the last scene is finished and the carolers leave the packed auditorium, there is the feeling of peace in the air and the true Christmas spirit in every heart.

JEANNE FRANKS, Reporter, Troupe 735



George Washington Slept Here, Troupe 822, Central High School, Oklahoma City, Okla., Maybelle Conger, Director.

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## LUX RADIO THEATRE

Columbia Broadcasting System

**L**IKE to see your favorite movie again? Chances are you can't find it playing at a local theatre. But you can have a front row seat at your radio loud-speaker to hear many of your favorite motion pictures recreated during each season of CBS Radio's *Lux Radio Theatre*.

Last season, for instance, dialers to the hour-long "Lux" program heard such screenplay favorites as *The Bishop's Wife*, *Lady in the Dark*, *African Queen*, *My Six Convicts*, *The Blue Veil*, *Les Miserables* and *Fourteen Hours*, featuring such top flight film talent as Ronald Coleman, Judy Garland, Stewart Granger, Cary



Olivia de Havilland recreated her starring role as *My Cousin Rachel* on the *Lux Radio Theatre*.



WQXR radio station's control board.

Grant, Susan Hayward, William Holden, Betty Hutton, Fernando Lamas, Terry Moore and Jean Simmons.

How a performer approaches the mike—and there are many ways that stars use a mike—makes little difference to anyone outside the studio audience. The important thing to the listener—especially the one who has seen the film version—is how well it has been adapted. Transposing must maintain the flavor more than the words, although both are required for recognition and satisfaction. *Lux Radio Theatre* fulfills the goals more than just adequately. Its offerings are pleasing recreations.

## BOB AND RAY

National Broadcasting Company

The team of Bob and Ray, imported from local broadcasting in the Boston area, has made quite a hit with network audiences. Their characterizations display a good deal of ingenuity, being patterned on persons who don't make the slightest claim to being caricatures of real persons, living or dead. These satirical pictures, coated liberally with humor that is situational rather than being predicated on snappy remarks, have a flavor much different from the usual comedian's. The humor brings forth such ideas as burning fallen leaves one at a time so as to minimize the possibility of spreading fire. Or you are advised to listen the next day for a recipe for a sauerkraut aspic and marshmallow salad.

These two creators of mirth are much fun, but you wonder just how long they can keep up the pace. Thus far they do several radio shows each week and another on television. Even if they have others helping them to write their material, there is going to come a time when the source will run dry. Hope it won't be too soon; they're too much fun to lose.

## FRANK EDWARDS

Mutual Broadcasting Company

There is a news-conscious period in our history, and most of us try to keep well informed. To listen to only one news-

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## B R O O K S

3 West 61st Street, New York, N. Y.  
Plaza 7-5800

caster is much worse than reading only one paper, because the longest radio newscast is only a fifteen-minute stint, hardly enough for more than just a skimming of the day's events. In fact back in the '30's there was always the admonition "See your newspaper for further details." You must remember also that almost every available source gives a view from a definite angle.

It is only fair then to assume that Frank Edwards, who is sponsored by the American Federation of Labor, is predisposed to slanting his news so that it interests and attracts the worker. Like any good writer, however, his approach is neither bold nor signaled ahead. He is smooth and the good speaker desired by any listener. However, more than that, his qualities include coherence and logic. His blind spot—if there is any—is far from obvious. Listening to him is certainly informative, a prime requisite.

## INDEPENDENT RADIO — WQXR

Often it is the small station that contributes valuable experiments in techniques of broadcasting. You may expect that only the bigger companies depart from the usual, but for a variety of reasons that is not so. WQXR, which makes its appeal to lovers of serious music and has demonstrated the possibility of controlling advertising, recently "showed" something fairly new. It is called binaural sound.

In ordinary broadcasting the sound is picked up in the studio from a number of microphones and blended in the control room. The same blended sound is then fed to the AM and FM transmitters for airing. The radio wave is picked up in the home on either AM or FM and heard through a single amplifier and speaker, like hearing with one ear.

In binaural transmission the sound is picked up by two microphones placed a short space apart. The signal from one microphone is fed through the control room to the AM transmitter, the other to the FM transmitter. There is no blending and the signals are kept separate. To receive the binaural effect in the home, the listener needs an AM and FM radio, placed at opposite sides of the room.



By SI MILLS

## SEE IT NOW

Columbia Broadcasting System

*See It Now*, television successor to CBS Radio's *Hear It Now*, projects into the medium of sight and sound the technique of presenting the news through the people who make the news. Persons and events on the front pages during the week are seen and heard. The program is in effect the news magazine of television.

With Murrow as on-camera editor, the news is presented through live pickups of events, and with motion pictures specially filmed. The show includes personal interviews, overseas reports, biographical features, human-interest stories, documentary features and late news breaks.

In its first two seasons *See It Now* has won every major television award. The program's coverage of the Korean front last year, *This Is Korea . . . Christmas '52*, was hailed as one of the high points in television's history. Critics greeted it with such phrases as "masterpiece of reportorial artistry," "unforgettable," "most sensitive yet" and "produced with exciting dignity."

During the coming season Ed Murrow and Fred Friendly again plan to turn their television eye on the news of the world wherever it is happening, giving the audience all the privileges and rewards of being a reporter with a world-wide police pass.

Viewers have accompanied Murrow in a jet fighter, rising to the defense of New York City under a mock enemy atom bomb attack, and in the submarine, *Sablefish*, under the waters of Long Island Sound. They paid a visit to the court of the Sultan of Morocco, and were on the set while Samuel Goldwyn was filming *Hans Christian Andersen*. On one spring broadcast viewers apprehensively watched the Brooklyn Dodgers in training. On another the show turned its cameras on a Passover Seder conducted in West Berlin by Jewish refugees less than one day out of Berlin.

### DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS PRESENTS

National Broadcasting Company

The trend in dramatic TV shows has always been towards name stars as hosts. Frequently these hosts are actors who from time to time appear in roles on the series they "emcee." Amongst the smoothest in this field is Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. His ability as a thespian is beyond question. The points for discussion thus lie elsewhere.

The primary test for any unit drama series is concerned with the choice of vehicles. Here the program under discussion does an outstanding job. For the most part it presents stories with a twist.

But, as in the O. Henry short stories, the "gimmick," although improbable, is not impossible. For instance, there was the one about the butcher whose bachelor boss came to dinner. The hostess sarcastically pre-empted her husband's chore of carving the duck. He, being a person who thought of carving as an art, and having been taunted by his shrewish wife for twelve years, is irritated to the point of anger and words. The guest beats an embarrassed and hasty retreat, only to learn later that his employee has divorced the woman. Next time the boss comes to dinner, the host is remarried, is very much in love, and has been instructing his wife in many things. When she takes over the meat carving, the boss stares. But this time Sir Husband sits back and watches the carving with the satisfaction of a teacher whose lessons are bearing fruit. The boss closes the play, "I thought for a moment this was where I came in." Not a momentous half-hour but most definitely an entertaining one.



It was big news in Brooklyn when Joe Black, ace relief hurler for the pennant-winning Dodgers and "Rookie of The Year," was interviewed by Edward R. Murrow on CBS-TV's *See It Now* through a two-way television hook-up from Black's home in Dodger-town to Murrow in the control studio.



Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., of Douglas Fairbanks Presents.



Edward R. Murrow and Fred Friendly, co-producers of CBS-TV's *See It Now* series.



# Thespian Chatter

## COQUILLE, OREGON

### Troupe 1066

Due to the incompleteness of our new high school stage, we had to present our senior play, *Night of January 16th*, penthouse style in the center of our large, new gymnasium floor. It was the first time this type of staging was utilized at Coquille, and it was a huge success. *Meet a Body* was next presented as the junior play in March on the old high school stage. Climaxing the year's activities was our second annual "Thespian Night," which included a formal initiation of new members preceded by three one-act plays: *Quiet, Please*, *Mooney's Kid Don't Cry* and *Silas Comes Home*. The last play was an original dramatization of Robert Frost's poem, *Death of a Hired Hand*, by our director, Win Kelly. As yet unpublished, any school desiring to produce this play can contact our troupe. We initiated more than 20 students this year.—Bobbie Jean Harris, Correspondent.

—O—

## INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

### Troupe 1240

In co-operation with the Drama Club, Troupe 1240 climaxed the 1952-53 season with a chartered bus trip to Terre Haute, Indiana, to see the Sycamore Players' production of *Romeo and Juliet* at Indiana State Teachers' College. In December, Thespians saw Katherine Cornell in *The Constant Wife*. With hopes of building a special library, the troupe purchased four books on the theatre as well as several play books. Productions included *Act Your Age*, *Follow the Dream*, *The Fairy's Tale*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *Twelfth Night*.—Charles A. Switzer, President.

—O—

## MIDLAND, TEXAS

### Troupe 845

After much hesitation as to what kind of a play we should select as our annual presentation for this year, Midland Troupe 845 voted unanimously to present the Casella-Ferris comedy, *Death Takes a Holiday*. The play gave our troupe a busy time for the six weeks it was in rehearsal: sets had to be built to resemble an Italian villa, costumes had to be made and such special effects as the transformation on the stage of a man to Death had to be planned. Every member helped with one phase or another of the production. Well received by large, attentive audiences both nights, the play proved well worth all the effort and time the troupe devoted to it.

Other Thespian activities for the year included two other three-act plays, *Seven Sisters*, and *You Can't Take It with You*, as well as numerous one-act plays, including the contest play, *Box and Cox*, *John Doe*, *The Last Trip Out*, *Bishop's Candlesticks* and a cutting of *Macbeth*. Climaxing the many events of the year, the annual coronation of the Catoico queen, our school favorite, was carried off in grand style.—Bill Robitsek, Vice-President.

—O—

## AMARILLO, TEXAS

### Troupe 335

Thespian Troupe 335 was quite active during the 1952-1953 season. The sixth period Thespian class presented *Grandma Pulls the Strings* as a pay program shortly after school started. In fact, during the course of the whole year fourteen one-act plays were given. Many members of Thespians took part in the annual school operetta, *The Firefly*, during the first six weeks of 1953. Perhaps the biggest venture of Troupe 335, though, was the Contest Play which competed in the Texas Interscholastic

League. The last act of *The Little Foxes* won first place in district and regional competition and fourth place out of eight entrants at State.—Sally Sparks, Reporter.

—O—

## LAWTON, OKLAHOMA

### Troupe 935

The year of 1952-1953 was very successful for Lawton High School's Troupe 935. Forty-three new members were initiated on March 25, and 46 members will return next September.

Three-act plays given during the year were *The Brainstorm*, *Room for One More*, *Aaron Slick of Punkin Crick* and *Annie Get Your Gun*. Attendance at all plays broke records of all other previous years.

Troupe members assisted on the production staff and as cast members of many community programs, such as radio programs, television programs, Lawton Little Theatre, Fort Sill dramatic productions, community concerts and the Lawton Easter Pageant.—Reporter.

—O—

## CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

### Troupe 200

To open the dramatic performances at Charleston High for 1952-53, Troupe 200 and the Speech and Dramatic Departments presented a Christmas choral drama, *The Child of Peace*. Our annual play festival, in which six one-act plays were given, proved to be very entertaining. An original operetta, *Naughty Merry Widow*, words and music by two students, David Parker and Gordon Gidley, made such a hit that not one, but several performances were staged. At Easter the combined dramatic groups gave *A Voice in the Wilderness*, a stirring choral drama, written by Nell Altizer, a student and Thespian. The staging and lighting plus the excellent performance of the dramatic chorus combined to make it



*Curses, the Villain Is Foiled*, Troupe 780, Aurora, Colo., High School, Marilyn Anderson, Sponsor.

one of the best choral dramas ever given in this school.—Jean Ford, Secretary.

—O—

## LACONIA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

### Troupe 1233

*The Clown Who Ran Away*, a charming children's play made more delightful by the introduction of a circus parade through the auditorium, last fall gave troupe 1233 the joy of performing to a capacity house two evenings. Later the play was taken to two neighboring institutions. The mid-winter play, *Down to Earth*, brought to the Laconia public some of the best high school dramatics in recent years. For participation in the State Drama Festival, with *Highness*, Laconia earned a "very good" rating. Six one-act plays by apprentices were presented in school assemblies and in local clubs.—Judy Bowen, Secretary.

—O—

## DAVIDSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

### Troupe 412

Ever since Thespian Troupe 412 was chartered in our school, it has been our policy to give an annual play for charity. Presenting this play is our largest and most important project of the year. On April 16 of this year

## A Merry, Merry Christmas!

By CARLA BLANK

CHRISTMAS is the most wonderful time of all. It is a time for all people everywhere. In the cities and towns the streets have taken on a magnificence never found there at any other time. The colored lights and tinsel make the heart hum carols. The hurrying and scurrying of many feet bustling to get their last minute shopping done before it is too late somehow form the rhythm of reindeer hooves. The shops are filled to capacity proving that Christmas fever attacks us all leaving no heart immune to the pleasant disease.

Teen-agers are wedging through the crowds to get to the nearest skating rink or try on formal for the Christmas Ball. On every street corner lurks a Santa, sometimes slightly motheaten but always jolly, to make the hearts of the smallest children skip a beat or two and maybe cause some young boys to sidle on past, while determining to change their ways because, after all, that new supersonic model space ship would be awfully nice to wake up to on Christmas morning.

The young are not the only ones struck with this delightful malady. If you look through the crowd at the toy counter in the big department store, you are very likely to discover the little old lady from down the street, trying to decide if her three-year-old grandson would rather have a picture book or a bright red fire-engine. And as you watch her you can almost see the thoughts of many, many Christmases ago when she filled a stocking for a now very successful lawyer who did not look quite so dignified and pompous then.

And look again. There, at the record counter. Isn't that the young couple from next door? They're listening to *Silent Night* and thinking of that old familiar story of the Savior's birth and wondering how it must have felt to have been the parents of the Blessed Babe. And they are promising each other that they will teach their baby, soon to be born, the Christian way of life so that he may grow up with the good will of the Christmas season always in his heart.

And then as the stores close, and the night lends its decorations of stars to the strings of colored lights, still people gather in the streets, reluctant to leave the festive scene. And as they raise their voices to sing the carols of peace on earth, good will toward men, people all over the world join with them in silent prayer. And for this time, this time of Christmas, all men become brothers.



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we had the pleasure of presenting *Lo and Behold* by John Patrick. We all enjoyed producing this play and were happy to present \$100 to the Cerebral Palsy fund. The play was very ably directed by our Thespian advisor, Hilda A. Kring.—*Sylvia Armstrong, Scribe.*

—O—

### PARKERSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA Troupe 264

The highlight of Troupe 264's activities was playing host to the Little Kanawa Regional Drama Festival, March 4, with eight schools participating. Christopher Lane of Ohio University served as Critic Judge. The guests were entertained at luncheon and a reception concluded the program.

Major productions included: *Thespians' Full House*, an evening of one-act plays; *The Pink Dress*, drama festival entry; *The Late George Apley*, senior play.

Thirty students and our sponsor attended the Drama Clinic of Ohio University. A miniature stage by Barbara Bassett won second place award in Technical Theatre Project at W. Va. State Drama Festival.—*Joan Page, Secretary.*

—O—

### WHITING, INDIANA Troupe 856

Have you ever wondered how a person's hat was "shot" off while on stage? We did. In *Annie Get Your Gun*, a crew member yanked it off with a thin black string.

Our Thespians discovered other "tricks of the trade." While working on *Strictly Formal*, we cut skin with an electric razor without touching skin; deceptive techniques of sword fighting were invented for the *The Musketeers*, a history assembly, and for the operetta *Martina*. The climb down the chimney for our Christmas program was unique.

Of course we produced several "purely" educational skits, in an entertaining way. Indiana's Riley Day was commemorated by dramatizations of his works. The skit, *Home-*

*work*, and a choral skit, *The Good Egg*, were studies of personalities.

Our underclassmen, the freshmen and sophomores, produced revues of their own to gain needed experience for the coming Thespian productions.—*Patricia Kozacik, Secretary.*

—O—

### HAMPTON, IOWA Troupe 1255

Perhaps it was just coincidence, but the first play staged after our acceptance into the Thespian Society was acclaimed "Best yet in Hampton." *Arsenic and Old Lace* was presented to an audience that rocked with laughter throughout the play and again on the curtain call, when, representing the bodies in the basement, 12 men filed solemnly from the basement door to take a bow. Those selected to be corpses were the ones judged least likely to be seen in a play—the football coach, the superintendent, the agriculture teacher and fathers of cast members better known for their business ability than for dramatic talent. The corpses thoroughly enjoyed their brief season in the spotlight—but then, doesn't everybody like to get into the act?—*Barbara Boehmler, Reporter.*

—O—

### NEWARK, DELAWARE Troupe 931

Thespian Troupe 931 of Newark High School entered the play, *A Sunny Morning*, in the Delaware Play Festival held at the University of Delaware. Many Thespians assumed leading roles in the Christmas play, *Birthday of a King*, while others helped with scenery, make-up and costumes. Thespians also presented *Ladies of the Mop* to the Women's New Century Club. The Thespians helped with the scenery and lighting for the faculty play, *Annie Get Your Gun*. Miss Ann Wooten, English teacher, who had the leading role, received an honorary membership in the Thespian Society for her outstanding work in the dramatics program. Jacqueline Chicky, an honor Thespian, appeared on television in the dramatics' and music departments' presentation of a *Prayer*

for Peace over station WDEL-TV. Our Thespian season will close with an initiation ceremony and party for 14 new members.—*Dolores Lloyd, Secretary.*

—O—

### LEWISTON, IDAHO Troupe 76

Troupe 76 takes a leading role in our two major three-act productions yearly. To give younger would-be actors a chance to participate in dramatics, the Thespians sponsor one-act plays for each of the undergraduate classes. Interest in dramatics has increased 100 percent since the freshmen, sophomores and juniors were offered more opportunities to prove their talents.

Our fall initiation features a formal banquet with guest speakers and entertainment. The spring initiation is designed especially to promote dramatics interest. Initiates and old members invite their parents to preview an underclassmen play, and then to partake of light refreshments.—*Carol Tonkin, President.*

—O—

### THERMOPOLIS, WYOMING Troupe 1104

*The Great Big Doorstep*, a hill-billy brawl, Was rewarded by many a long curtain call. No twitching, no laughing, no forgetting lines. As the juniors presented a play of all times.

A mystery, a murder, a trial, and all. Seniors decked out in finery as for a ball. They laughed, yet they wondered what the verdict would be.

As *Night of January 16th* was a real mystery. The contest play entitled *High Window* ... Earned a high rating and brought in the dough. When the juniors presented three one-act plays, They brought an end to our dramatic days.—*Betty O'Connell, Scribe.*

—O—

### DULUTH, MINNESOTA Troupe 1200

Our up and growing chapter at Duluth East has really been working hard this year to "act

well our parts." To start the year we put on the ever popular *You Can't Take It with You*. Next on the agenda was the spine-tingling mystery, *The Thirteenth Chair*; then we put on our stage Shaw's immortal *Pygmalion*. Another featured attraction that called for an additional performance was the popular Broadway musical, *Brigadoon*.

We feel that we have made great strides in promoting high school drama at our school, and with several new Thespians, we hope that our future productions will be even better.—*Lestlie Shapiro, President*. —O—

#### HILLSIDE, NEW JERSEY Troupe 887

The annual banquet of Hillside's Thespian Troupe 887 was held last spring on May 22 in honor of its fifth anniversary. During each annual banquet the troupe installs its new officers and initiates new members. Thespian members of previous years attend the banquet. Jean Russell, Broadway actress, provided the evening's entertainment. She read parts from *Peter Pan* and told of her many interesting experiences in the theatre. Among our guests were representatives from the Mount St. Mary's Thespian Troupe 1309 in Plainfield, New Jersey.

Our troupe in November presented *The Running Tide*, a one-act play by Jay Reid Gould. During the 1953-1954 term the Thespians of Hillside will study drama techniques, put on a variety show and an annual spring play, see a Broadway musical and visit a television studio.

Among the most interesting ideas we have installed is a "T-Day," where our Thespians would invite different troupes to Hillside. Here we would exchange ideas and bid welcome to the new troupes of the area.—*Dorothy Gudat, Reporter*. —O—

#### NEWPORT, WASHINGTON Troupe 572

An informal initiation was held on Sept. 28 for the purpose of taking in two members. The new members are Camille Chrysler, an active dancer as well as actress, and Joyce Krehbiel, also an active participant in the high school productions.

The troupe discussed the first play of the new school year and decided to do *I Love Lucy* from the television show. This play promises to be very interesting and fun to do.

Officers for 1953-54 are Sandra Anderson, President, and Ruth Carlton, Secretary, Treasurer and Scribe.—*Ruth Carlton, Scribe*.

Standing committees for make-up, props and stage crew have been chosen from a list of volunteers. Plans are being made to raise money for the club.—*Joan Boxer, Vice-President*. —O—

#### HAYS, KANSAS Troupe 234

For many years the last Thespian meeting of the school year had always been a formal initiation of new members and installation of new officers. But last year our Troupe, or rather the underclassmen of the Troupe, decided to make some changes in the traditional last meeting.

An inspiring program was planned honoring the senior Thespians. Yearbooks were made resembling play books and they were given to every Thespian.

For the entertainment we wanted to do something original, something that would not only benefit our Thespians, but other Thespians as well. So we wrote a new Thespian song which was dedicated to all senior Thespians.—*Marilyn Mermis, Secretary*. —O—

#### BRISTOW, OKLAHOMA Troupe 183

Busy as the proverbial bees and beavers, our troupe has produced as Thespian plays, *The Sisters McIntosh*, *Antic Spring*, and *Baker's Dozen*, had leads in the all-school play, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, produced and directed class plays, and qualified for state contests with a radio play and stage play with ratings of superior.

Biggest thrill of the year came when we were guests of the Tulsa Little Theatre at a dress rehearsal and backstage party, where we gained valuable tips on theatre arts.

The unique method of advertising using Windex to clean windshields of cars parked in the business section and leaving a play bill under the wipers proved profitable. Two initiations, adding 18 members, were held as an assembly program.—*Ellen Claire Ostrom, Secretary*. —O—

#### TONASKET, WASHINGTON Troupe 910

Hi kids! Tonasket reporting:

Our troupe already has two three-act plays to put on. They are a mystery comedy, *Rehearsal for Death* and a comedy, *Jessica's Journey*. We are very anxious to put them on stage. Our sponsor, Yvette Snowden, gave us a



**Christmas for the Duchess**, Troupe 683, Mt. St. Dominic Academy, Caldwell, N. J., Sister M. Catherine Denis, Sponsor.

#### ELLENVILLE, NEW YORK Troupe 235

With the 1953-54 school year in full swing, the Ellenville High School Senior Little Theatre held its first organizational meeting Tuesday, September 22. Rose Giovannello was elected club president. Joan Boxer is vice-president while Lita Newman and Minna Podber will serve as secretary and treasurer respectively.

The club is preparing for DUSO playmeets with Liberty, Monticello and Fallsburgh High Schools.

very nice banquet at which the keynote was "fun."

Our new officers for this year are Lenora Rothrock, president; Clay Fruit, vice-president; Sharon Vance, secretary; Marguerite Weddle, treasurer; Estelle Cooksey, scribe. —*Sharon Vance, secretary*. —O—

#### OSAGE, IOWA Troupe 843

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play, *Nine Girls*, proved to be both, plus a perfect climax to a year of work and fun. Ten girls and a boy reveled in their parts in this mystery-drama with comic overtones. We Thespians say, "Try this play if you're short on boys and long on ambition." Our two other plays, *Men Are like Street Cars* and *Our Miss Brooks* were great successes with actors and audience alike. And here's an idea for a Thespian meeting. We chose the unusual one-act play, *Death Cell*, which a few members gave before the group minus scenery but compensating by lots of "atmosphere."—*Pat Landborg, President*. —O—

#### ADA, MINNESOTA Troupe 1228

Our social events of the year included a tea served after our fall initiation and a banquet held at the time of our spring initiation. Awards for the year were handed out at the banquet. Twenty-nine new members were added at the two ceremonies. Our most interesting project for the year was a program of five one-act plays given March 2 and directed by members of our Troupe. Thespians made up the cast of the contest one-act play which won the sub-district. There was a total membership this year of 34, fourteen of which will be in school next fall.—*Alva Gade, Reporter*. —O—

#### BANKS, OREGON Troupe 828

After our fall play we held an informal initiation bringing in four new members. The spring student-body play, *The Night of January Sixteenth*, was followed by a formal initiation held at the Country Club. It was combined with a banquet. It was a rather large group because everyone was permitted to bring a friend. Everyone had a grand time and went home stuffed. At this initiation we took in three new members, making a total of 22 members.

Last year our Troupe bought a new curtain for the stage. We are now deep in debt, so we have to work hard.—*Chlorine Trammell, Reporter*. —O—

#### LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS Troupe 287

We are a new troupe this year. Dramatics began here by the production of the senior play, *Brother Goose*. Eight one-act plays were presented and also the junior play, *Men Are like Street Cars*. The choir presented an operetta, *The Fortune Teller*, in which all speaking parts were coached by our Thespian sponsor, Sue Rose Harter. Thespian members participated in the *June Bug Jamboree*, an all school talent show to raise money for our school annual. At our last meeting we initiated 23 new members into our original group of 16. The "Best Thespian" award was given to Pat Wagner at the annual award assembly, May 22.—*Reporter*. —O—

#### WINCHESTER, ILLINOIS Troupe 594

We with our sponsor, Loretta C. Glossop, have been very active during the 1952-53 season. Our activities have included seven student-directed one-act plays for our monthly Dramatics meetings and a one-act play for a style show. Our annual three-act junior play, *Men Are like Street Cars*, and the senior class play, *No More Homework*, were outstanding suc-



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cesses. Our annual trip was to St. Louis to see Margaret O'Brien in *Peg o' My Heart*. The year was brought to an end with the initiation of 10 new members and the presentation of pins and Thespian stars.—*Betty Jackson, Secretary.*

### CASEY, ILLINOIS Troupe 1219

Early in the year we presented *Double Door*, our junior class play. No sooner had we closed the door on it, we began our Christmas play, *The Long Christmas Dinner*, which we enjoyed very much. Contest work kept us busy then with our one-act, *The Flattering Word*, which was performed in District and Sectional competition. We also entered several individual events. *Harvey* enjoyed a highly successful performance as our senior class play. Near the end of May, we presented our Initiation Ceremony for 13 new Thespians in all-school assembly.—*Barbara Hires, Secretary.*

### LARAMIE, WYOMING Troupe 70

We began the 1952-1953 year early in the fall with the presentation of *Stage Door*, a three-act play with an 18-member cast.

Twenty-five sophomores, juniors and seniors were voted into the club after they "tried out" before the regular Thespian members. These pledges built the Thespians' Homecoming float and presented their choice for Queen at an all-school skit assembly.

The junior class play, *Too Young, Too Old*, and the senior play, *Quality Street*, were under the sponsorship of the Thespians. As a result of these plays, 20 new members were accepted into the club. The last production of the year was *An Evening of One-Act Plays*, during which six one-acts were presented. Every one of the 60 Thespians were given some part in this production. Two of the one-act plays, *When Shakespeare's Ladies Meet*, and *Choir Rehearsal*,

received superior ratings at State Speech Festival.

The last activity of the year, the annual Thespian Honor Night, brought to a close one of the busiest and best years we ever had.—*Mary Strange, Secretary.*

### PRINCETON, ILLINOIS Troupe 1120

We had indeed a varied dramatic year. All of our senior members took part in the senior play, *Best Foot Forward*. The junior play, *Our Miss Brooks*, made 13 new members eligible. Initiations were held twice this year. The initiates were required to put on an original play within a designated time limit. In the one-act field, we started off the year with *Will o' the Wisp*, a mystery which kept everyone in the school assembly on the edge of their seats. In March we produced *Thespians Three*, an evening of three one-acts. *Sparkin'*, a backwoods comedy, proved hilarious. *Trifles* was a deep mystery with excellent acting displayed. *Happy Journey* went to sectional contest in our state. We have had a very successful year under the direction of Barbara Sloan, our sponsor.—*Shirley Spencer, Secretary.*

### HIGHLAND PARK, MICHIGAN Troupe 518

The dramatic department of Highland Park High School is, at present, building for a larger, improved Thespian Troupe. At our initiation ceremonies on May 20 we initiated 21 new members. Our first step in the building of a better troupe was the Spring play. This year we presented Jane Kendall's adaptation of the famous classic, *Jane Eyre*, under the able direction of our new sponsor, Mary Van Noy Fraser. The play was successful both financially and dramatically. We have many plans for an even more successful 1953-54 season.—*Oran Dean Gough, Secretary.*

### PAMPA, TEXAS

### Troupe 1010

We have been extremely active during the 1952-53 school year. Under the direction of Billie Hutchings, our sponsor, we have presented for assembly and for civic clubs a one-act play, *Box and Cox*, and a musical program which included dancing, singing and impersonations. We received a superior rating at contest for our cutting from *Twelfth Night*. The highlight of the year was the annual Thespian initiation. We received 20 members at a very impressive candlelight service. Many of our Thespians held important roles in the junior class play, *My Sister Eileen*, in the senior class play, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, and in the Children's Theatre class plays, *The Elves and the Shoemaker* and *King Midas and the Golden Touch*. Our successful year of drama ended with a picnic and bonfire initiation at Palo Duro Canyon on May 29.—*Don Nelson, President.*

### GRAHAM, TEXAS

### Troupe 1196

We completed a successful year with two big nights in our "District Court Room." Our play was *Night of January Sixteenth*. We packed the room both nights, and were asked to do it for a third time. This was a court room drama by Ayn Rand, and a very good play. Our audience said it was the best play they had ever seen.

Our troupe, organized in February of 1952, had 18 charter members. Now, one year later, we have some 70. Our Thespian club is one of the best in school and the youngest. For a high school of some 400, we think our average is pretty good. It would be interesting to know which high school in Texas has the largest per cent of membership at the present time.—*Grace Vick, Reporter.*



## I MAKE COSTUMES

(Continued from page 15)

I sure like the American part. So up to date! Whoopee! Ride 'em, Cowboy! Even the Western Frontier is in that book! There's Calamity Jane and Billy the Kid!

Ho hum, enuf of that. Wonder what Tiny's doing? Better I keep out of her way! My, my, she's a Mighty Mite! and pure dynamite! Those silk threads sure tickle my nose. It sure would be fun to pull on that cloth she's cutting! No, guess I'd better not! This isn't the time for "unuseful" fun!

This Theatre stuff is pretty serious business — even to the Young!

I could snooze right well to the hum of the Singer! Bonnie is surely busy making that pattern for the Dauphin's mighty-fancy suit.

It's a good thing she took sewing in Grade School, Home Ec, but then her Mom's a good seamstress — Rags, her dog, told me so! That's how I know! You know, the longer I hang around here the more I learn that dramatics surely does take a lot of ingenuity and hard work.

Well, seems Everyone who stays 'round here must contribute, so I guess I'll just take this piece of lace over to Bonnie. It's going to be put on the cuffs of that coat she's making. I'd better handle it carefully cause it came off her Grandmother's best underskirt and It came West in a Prairie Schooner! Thanks for the nice pat on my head! Makes me feel appreciated! I believe that's what most of us work for! These kids, surely. Just a little pat, — just a

little appreciation!

My stars and garters! Pal, you're positively Paul! Look at those long, skinny legs and those bony knees. Kid, you're tremendous! in that Armor top! Boy! It's a good thing you're only trying it on for size and you aren't going to be St. Joan cause the burning at the stake could be for real!

But, say, chum, you can have my next bone — you, a real he-teen-man working at sissy stuff or what's supposed to be — Now that job takes a real knack and when it comes to he-men doing things that Leonardo Da Vinci was no Smool!

You know the stage is really the world and it takes real people to make a real world!

But secretly, in my heart, I think a pair of gold-flecked, hazel eyes, the ones above that pert nose; those so intent upon tracing the newspaper patterns from the Master pattern for the hoop skirts for the whole chorus in Blossom Time, had more to do with My Master's present occupation than even he knew! Blossom Time? Sure, that's the Music Department's production but we're doing the staging, lighting and costumes and the lines. Our teacher (notice I say "our" cause she considers me an important part of all this Glory, and I consider her ok cause she appreciates!) says, "We Cooperate and want Cooperation in return. It takes all departments working together to make this thing called Theatre go!"

\* \* \*

I love the room backstage crowded with platforms, props, paints, picture racks and make-

shift platforms. I love the exciting odor of the grease paint that comes thru the partitioned walls. I love the happy hum of the voices of my chum and his busy friends as they snip, cut, sew and talk teenage talk!

I love all the costumes from the old plays that have been wrapped up and put away; — Gab's wings, the vari-colored aluminum foil ones, so grand, so impressing — Made by my chum's chum John! (He's in the service, now a flier! I guess Gab's wings sprouted, and I hope they are protecting him. He welded them, designed them and wore them himself with great dignity and quiet charm in The Green Pastures); the little black-eyed Susan halos, the bright green Peter Pan costume made with loving-care for the little boy who did not want to grow up! The wedding gown for Emily in Our Town, the bum costume from Winterset, the Grand Gown for Mary Todd Lincoln, the burnished gold of Lewis and Clark's costumes of No More Frontier, the Scotch plaids of The Hasty Heart; — they are all there, with countless others, telling of more busy people contributing to the world of Make-Believe!

But the thing I love most of all is the scene in the far-corner where Francie, our patient, lovable student-friend is bent over gleaming, white strobolite satin and fashioning, by hand, the flowing robe for the Top-of-the-Tree Angel. Lustrous, kind, unforgettable black eyes reflect the pureness of the shimmery satin and the glory of the glitter star that bespeaks —

Peace of Earth  
To Men — Good Will!

\* \* \*

The snowflakes had stopped dancing, so had the young! All material things (the Wing-ding-ling containers, too) had been neatly put away, — that is all but the costume for the Tree Top Angel —

It was left to glow in the light of the star!

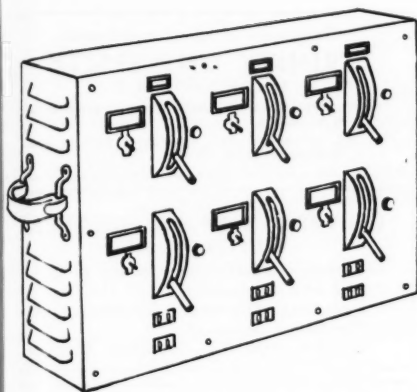
\* \* \*

— Outside Jack had frosted the Marsh-mallow world with a glistening radiance! We walked, — My master, Betty Belle Masks . . . and I, through magnolia whiteness to climb into the awaiting winterized chariot —, "Hercules" — the truck! I hopped into the Back. No fluff-pup with an heaven-turned-upward nose was going to Rattle-Trap me

No siree!



Wizard of Oz, Troupe 190, Coeur d'Alene, Ida., High School, Evelyn Townsend, Sponsor.



A Powerstat Package Dimmer non-interlocking. Six 1000W variable transformer dimmers. (Courtesy Theatre Production Service, Inc.)

## LIGHTING CONTROL

(Continued from page 11)

concerned with lighting the *acting area* and *not* the *audience*. *Second*, we have the problem of lighting the actors from *all four sides*. *Third*, we have the problem of lighting all areas of the stage so that the actors will not move in and out of shadows, unless that is the effect desired. *Fourth*, we must remember that we are to light the *faces of the actors* and not the *floor of the stage*. *Fifth*, we are to follow the principle of the 45 degree angle in lighting.

We will assume that we are lighting an acting area of 16 by 20 feet. This area will be divided into six areas of 8 by 6½ feet. The principle of cross-spotting the acting areas on the proscenium stage has been pretty generally accepted. This practice involves directing two spotlights on a given area from an angle of 45 degrees above the stage and also 45

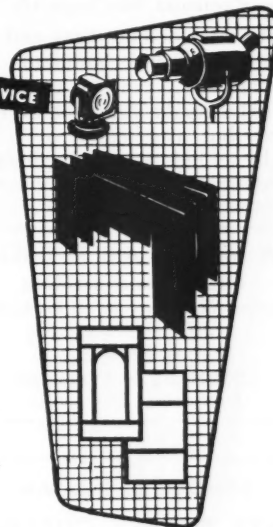


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degrees to each side. The actor on the arena stage must be lighted from all four sides, so by simply doubling the cross-spotting technique, the desired effect can be achieved. In this manner the actor is lighted by two spotlights in a given area whether he is facing north, east, south, or west. By lighting each of the six areas in the same manner, it is possible to cover the six areas with a total of 24 spotlights. As mentioned previously, 24 fresnel 6-inch 250W spotlights would give you quite an even effect. This number could be handled with the six 1000W dimmers. As we are using the reflector spotlights in our Texas A and I arena theatre and are at the present time limited to use of 150W lamps, we set the additional 12 spotlights to add light to the more important areas and to blend other areas. You will find that a combination of the reflector spots and reflector floods will give the result wanted. In the case of a longer throw and a flatter angle, you will use the reflector spot in order to reduce the spill into the audience. The beam angle of the reflector spot is 15 degrees as compared with 40 degrees for the reflector flood. In cases in which the spot unit is being directed toward the center of the acting area with little likelihood of spill, the flood may be used. It will also be found that the use of the baffle ring to reduce the spill will enable you to use floods.

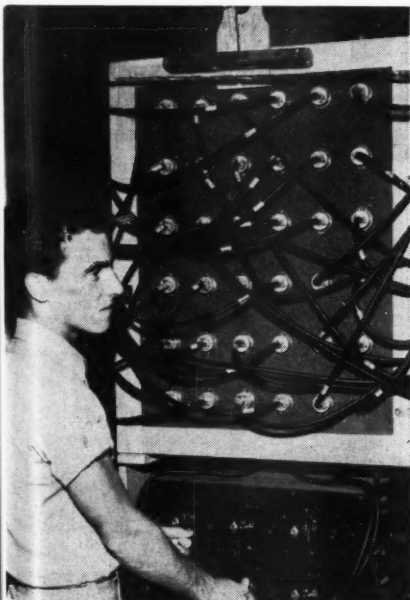
In setting the lights, it is wise to dim the units to the point where the filament can be seen. Then, by taking a position in the center of the area being covered and centering the filament in the spot from a position about five feet from the floor, you can accurately set the lights. This job can be done speedily by a six

man light crew; one person should be at the switchboard, one in the center of the acting area, and four others to adjust the four lights toward each area. After the lights have been set, they should be brought up full on the dimmer in order to check for coverage, as well as spill into the audience.

Another principle which is generally accepted in connection with the cross-spotting technique is the use of a cool color from one side and a warm color from the other. As this technique is enlarged to include the four lights covering a given area, it would result in the cool colors and warm colors being opposite each other. If using fresnel spots or any spotlights requiring gelatines, combinations which have proved effective are No. 57 (light amber) and No. 17 (special lavender); No. 25 (light blue) and No. 2 (pink); No. 29 (steel blue) and No. 62 (light salmon). Glass color filters for use with the reflector spotlights are available in similar hues.

In addition to the lighting of the stage area, attention should be given to the lighting of the auditorium itself. The room in which you locate your theatre will have a set of lights. You probably will not want to use all of the units. Although not absolutely necessary, it will add considerably to the effectiveness of your production if you secure a dimmer with which to control the house-lights.

Finally, the importance of being able to dim to a complete blackout and back to full cannot be overstressed with the arena production. Your lights are your curtains. They represent the only way to get your production under way and to bring scenes to a close.



Dick Humes, student electrician at Texas College of Arts and Industries, shown at the portable switchboard and panelboard, the construction of which is explained in Mr. Skinner's article.

## LOOK! NO NERVES!

(Continued from page 10)

idea is to set a definite time and let that time be the absolute minimum for the job to be done.

Not only should a definite date be announced, but a schedule of rehearsals should be set before work begins. If there are students who think they could not

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meet this schedule, they should not try out for parts. It should be understood that taking a part in the play is equal to agreement with the plan of work.

It is wise, in addition to setting the time of rehearsals, to make a time-table of accomplishments for these work periods. Here is a suggested arrangement of a three-week schedule:

First Week (On stage, learning action and interpretation, using script)  
First night — first act  
Second night — second act  
Third night — third act  
Fourth night — whole play

Second Week (All lines memorized — no scripts allowed on stage)  
Night by night schedule same as first week

Third Week (Work of polishing)  
First night — whole play  
Second night — whole play  
Third night — dress rehearsal  
Fourth night — brief run-over of any rough spots noted the night before  
Fifth night — GIVE THE PLAY

Once a plan like this is presented, both students and director will appreciate its advantages. And now we come to Father. However apprehensive he has been at the mention of class plays, you will be able to secure his approval and cooperation if, soon after try-outs, you send him a letter similar to the following:

Dear Parent,

We wish to congratulate you on the fact that your daughter Nancy has been chosen for a part in the senior class play. This is a coveted honor of the senior year, and we are sure you are as happy as we are to see her have the part.

While a part in the play carries responsibility as well as honor, close planning will enable her to perform her part without hurting her academic work or her health.

For your information we submit the following features of our plans:

1. Rehearsals will be held Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights, beginning at 7:30 and ending at 9:00. To get the work done in such a brief time, perfect attendance and absolute promptness are musts. The director promises to see that Nancy is dismissed promptly at 9:00. Will you help her to get there by 7:30?

2. At the beginning of the second week, actors will go on the stage without their books. You can help get this memorizing done by cueing Nancy when she is studying her lines.

3. No visitors will be allowed at rehearsals. A student actor does not do his best work if outsiders are watching him during the learning stages.

We know you join us in hoping for the very best play we have ever had. The next three weeks will not be easy, but working together will reduce the difficulty. And a good play will justify whatever sacrifices we have had to make.

Yours sincerely,

With even Father on our side, how can we lose?

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## THEN AND NOW

(Continued from page 9)

satisfaction, no matter how tired they are, and then they sit back and gloat over the results. It is wonderful to have the audience applaud a stage setting, but more wonderful to have rough-and-ready stage crew members applaud their own hard-won efforts just among themselves.

It is those boys who have written from the far corners of the earth, New Guinea, Korea, Alaska, Florida, France, "I wish I were back on the stage. What play and operetta are you doing?" For many of those boys working in a stage setting, it was the first time in their lives that they had ever known the inner satisfaction of real achievement.

When I first began to work on high school productions, I knew nothing about building a stage set. Neither did anyone else in our school. Fortunately for me, I came in contact with a boy who liked to work in construction. I knew a little art and we put together what we knew with others working with us. We have worked on that principle ever since and added a second, "If it isn't the best we can do, it is not good enough."

Better electrical equipment (even home made) and more skillful electricians produce lighting effects that we never dreamed of 30 years ago. My introduction to the possibilities of something beyond "just lights" in high school came about 23 years ago when I had a young electrician who became so enthusiastic over his work that he would not even stop to eat. When I found that he had gone 24 hours without food (and he was not a poor boy), I knew I had a genius. He said, "I want an assistant who is so crazy about electricity that he will work all day and all night and not even stop to eat." Since that time I have insisted upon regular meal hours, even for the most aggressive "eager beavers."

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Last, but not least, the old time play coach is giving way to the director, more or less adequately trained in play production. Time was when anyone could coach a play; some people still think that. We directors know better, and many of our administrators agree with us and even see that we have extra time and even extra salary.

I have been directing plays for 40 years. In that time I have learned much. I have made many mistakes; I still do, but I don't make the same mistakes. I started without any formal training (which I received later), but I had a father who was passionately fond of the theatre. He was a good actor and director himself. He passed the torch on to me. I was exposed to the theatre and had the opportunity of seeing almost every good production that was proper for young girls to see. I had an art education which helped. Then I learned by the "trial and error" method. Let me tell you one of my worst errors.

In my early years I chose to do a performance of Josephine Preston Peabody's poetic play, *The Piper*. In that performance I committed all the errors of the inexperienced "coach." We were still painting on the scenery as the curtain time approached; the Piper, who had to fake the playing of his pipe, took the flute away from his lips and to my horror the music went gaily on off stage. The young girl had practiced fainting on newspapers so she would not get her dress dirty. Then she miscalculated her position because we had not practiced with the curtain, fainted outside the curtain line and had to pick herself up when the curtain closed. We spent too much time on Act I and too little on Act IV so that the Piper did not know one word in the last act. I read a line and he repeated it, and that went on all through the act. I left through the back entrance that night!

The years have passed all too quickly. My years in the high school theatre have been a wonderful experience both in plays and friendships. I have wept bitter tears over our failures and our mistakes; today I can laugh at them. I have been desperately discouraged many times; I have been completely exalted at other times. I have been so weary that I wondered how I ever got into this show business. Then the house lights dim, the curtain goes up and always it is a thrill. Everything is forgotten except "The play's the thing." Some little incident or comment raises you to heights undreamed of, as when an old time professional scene painter said of our set for *You Can't Take It With You*, "It looks just like a Belasco set." That was not merely a compliment; it was a triumph.

The High School Theatre—Then and Now—is a precious living thing, sparkling, with dreams and magic. After all these years I am still carrying my torch—high—for high school dramatics.

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# BRIEF VIEWS

By WILLARD FRIEDERICH



## For the Producing Groups

**ONCE IN EVERY FAMILY** by Marrijane and Joseph Hayes. 3-act comedy (though farce is a more accurate description), Samuel French. Royalty: \$25. 8 M, 8 W. Setting: a basement rumpus room.

Even *You Can't Take It with You* will probably seem tame stuff when compared with the frenzy this family churns up in the course of one brief week-end. When Mrs. Brooks goes off to a reunion of her college class, she leaves Mr. Brooks at home to supervise the paper-hangers, to referee the altercations between his daughter Babs and her girl friend Jill, and their current heart-throbs, Jerry and Shipahoy, to nurse his recently diagnosed case of ulcers, and to try to wiggle out of his scheduled appearance as an end-man in the PTA minstrel show. Poor father's dress suit is mistakenly sent to the rummage sale, his boss is outraged at the suggestion that he substitute as end-man, the paper-hangers quit and the next-door neighbors end up quarreling violently with father, the youngsters and even father's boss. To keep things moving, son Bruce arrives on a furlough with two army pals who immediately get involved with the two girls and their recalcitrant escorts. When mother returns, however, father has papered the nine rooms (all "crooked" is mother's innocent comment), the neighbors agree to withdraw their law suit against father's boss and the youngsters are reconciled. Father recovers his dress suit and decides to be in the minstrel show, just to round out the day.

This play will probably appeal to virtually all high-school casts, for it has snappy dialogue, fast movement and interesting, even though extremely farcical, characters. This reviewer is perhaps too skeptical, but it is still his opinion that this all-too-common type play is one of the most difficult things an adolescent cast may attempt. It requires expert timing, sure pantomime and control of bodily response and a brittle tossing off of lines to prevent a heavy-handed touch. There are several scenes that seem forced in their humor, just as *You Can't Take It with You* does in spots; and deft playing is needed to counteract this sense of "working too hard to be funny." Lastly, the role of father is a difficult one, for father is angry and upset in almost every scene and, as in *Life with Father*, explosively shouts and protests continuously. To find variety in this role and then to portray it technically will not be easy. The fact undoubtedly remains, however, that many high-school casts will do this play and enjoy it immensely, for it is good fun, has a somewhat different setting and provides a large number of important and fascinating roles. A "howling success" is the only plausible prediction.

**FATHER WAS A HOUSEWIFE** by Vera and Ken Tarpley. A three-act comedy; Row Peterson. 6M, 9W (9 are smaller roles). Setting: a living room, with minor changes.

This play is by a sponsor of Troupe 623, Crystal Lake, Illinois, and has been tested in production by that group. The story has an interesting twist, for it presents Tom and Ann Butler in an exchange of roles: Ann is a successful doctor and Tom, who somehow never got started at earning a living because of an early marriage, the arrival of the twins, Doug and Julie, his interest in song writing, and his wife's internship, has stayed at home running the house. Things have run smoothly for a good many years, but now, suddenly, problems arise: Doug is in trouble at school because he resents criticism of his father; Julie is

beginning to resent the fact that her mother is not like other mothers; and a neighbor nominates Tom for "Mother of the Year."

Tom quits, Ann moves her office into the home to prove she can also run a house, and things are really grim until Tom suddenly finds a market for his songs and becomes a sensation. The ending is particularly satisfying, however, because there are no sudden unmotivated turn-about conversations and changes: Ann will continue with her career — in her downtown office! — and Tom will continue to manage the house as well as write his songs.

Music for four songs (by Mrs. Tarpley), all of them quite catchy and singable, is included. Tom and a girl (who plays a bit part of a radio-TV singer) are required to do both singing and piano playing, although the latter could be faked.

**HE WHO WALKS IN LOVE** by Elizabeth B. Hellier. A one-act Christmas play; Eldridge. Royalty: Purchase of 8 copies. 13M, 4W, and extras (virtually all parts are bits). Setting: Courtyard of an Inn.

Nyone, a slave girl, befriends a young man and his pregnant wife and finds them room in the stable of her master's inn. When the Magi bring their gifts of gold to the Christ child, Mary uses it to buy Nyone's freedom and takes her with them to her people in Egypt on their flight there to escape Herod.

There is provision for inclusion of off-stage singing, and the school choir could be an important part of the production. The dialogue is a bit heavy-handed with an attempt to use archaic language, such as "thee" and "thou;" the script would probably be improved by allowing the actors to modernize their lines and use present-day English and sentence structure.

**TWO DATES FOR TONIGHT** by Paul C. McCoy. A three-act comedy; Eldridge. Royalty: Purchase of 12 copies. 6M, 8W (roles well-balanced). Setting: a living room.

The Mayfield family's usually smooth-running course is somewhat disrupted when daughter Anne is forced to accept a date for the prom with a rich mother-dominated nonentity because his father can get her father a contract and his mother can get her mother into the Garden Club. To evade the engagement, Anne engineers a kidnapping; but things really explode when the wrong girl (the daughter of her father's business prospect) is kidnapped and when Anne inadvertently locks a young stranger in the basement and discovers too late that he is the visiting lecturer for the Garden Club. As one may guess, however, before the evening is over Anne is given credit for rescuing all of them from embarrassing situations, and she willingly accepts a date from the reformed nonentity.

While this play has rather typical farcical elements, it manages, nevertheless, to maintain a fairly reasonable level of characterization and action most of the time. The ending is perhaps too pat for some to accept, and there is an impossibly precocious fourteen-year-old who is pretty irritating; but on the whole, many groups will probably find this an entertaining and acceptable play.

**JUST OFF BROADWAY** by Don Douglas. A three-act comedy; Walter Baker. Royalty: Purchase of 9 scripts. 4M, 5W. Setting: Parlor of a boarding house for theatrical neophytes.

As a refreshing relief comes this little comedy about a group of young hopefuls who are trying to crash Broadway BUT, unlike such characters in similar plays, who are all realistic, down-to-earth kids with a sense of humor and

just average, or even less, talent. While some of them do have their unexpected last-minute successes, they are not the fairy-tale success myths one is accustomed to find in typical amateur or Hollywood plots. Probably the least believable outcome is that of Eloise, the beautiful, dumb, blonde contest-winner; but, since she is obviously modeled after Dagmar of TV fame, one can hardly protest that such things "just don't happen."

Characters are interesting and, aside from the middle-aged proprietress, all are young people. Only one role, that of Baxter, the hypochondriac counterfeiter, fails to meet the test of "holding the mirror up to nature." The only difficult characterization is that of Bea, the actress, who must do French, Irish, English, and Scotch dialects — and do them well enough to convince the audience that she really is good.

**WONDER BOY** by Bettye Knapp. A three-act comedy; Eldridge. Royalty: Purchase of 12 copies. 6M, 8W. Setting: living room.

Although many will feel that this plot is far-fetched in its basic story outline (and the reviewer would not dream of arguing with them), the fact still remains that the characterization, lines, and actions are almost always handled with a logical restraint that makes for a pleasant and fairly believable evening of fun. Compared to many wild farces, this play is virtually a realistic treatment of a somewhat implausible but not-necessarily-impossible situation.

Leland wakes up after a year's coma, induced by a fall down the stairs, and is the exact opposite of his former shy, modest self. The public, interested in his case by the sympathetic stories of a young journalist, is shocked by the switch and nearly hounds his bewildered parents out of their home. Fortunately another accidental blow on the head restores Leland's former personality before drastic results to him and his family. Undoubtedly the AMA would hesitate to underwrite the medical motivation in this plot, but then, neither would they endorse the modern witchcraft in *Bell, Book and Candle*. If played with restrained realism, this play will probably be an enjoyable production for all concerned.

**BERNARDINE** by Mary Chase. A two-act comedy; Dramatists Play Service. Royalty: On application. 12M, 5W, and extras (some of them bits). Setting: 11 changes of 5 locales (could be done by suggestion only).

It seems a shame that few — or, more likely, no — high schools will feel that they can produce this delightful and penetrating comedy of the tragedy of adolescence. It is beautifully written and quite likely comes closer to plumbing the depths of the laughter and tears of teen-agers than most of its type. The details of the piece — most of which can hardly be cut or softened without harming the general tone — will frighten most directors (and justifiably so, in most communities), for parents will be offended at the thought of their sons drinking 3.2 beer (though obviously some of them do now and then) and talking frankly about girls (though Kinsey's report should have made their attitudes quite clear). And yet, if one will only take a moment to look beneath the sophisticated surface of this play, he should see that no more tender portrait of the "lost" adolescent trying to find his way into adulthood has been written. The whole point of the play is that this fumbling, crude smart-aleck is merely trying to become a man — who is accepted as a man by his parents and peers — and that he is hoping desperately that the acceptance will be on clean moral grounds but without embarrassing preaching.

This reviewer has a kind of feeble hope that somewhere some director with an intelligent audience will take the courage to produce this play. Perhaps a prologue — the reading of Mrs. Chase's touching introduction — could help prepare the audience for understanding what is below the surface of the play — just as the must try to understand what is below the surface of the disturbing youth in their homes.